

BULLY

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+
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THIS ACTUALLY HAPPENED

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INT. NONDESCRIPT ROOM - A TABLE

Across from us, a seated PRISONER, 34, inspects her coarse hands. She fidgets. Feigns interest. Then acknowledges us with a penetrating stare. The eyes of the damned.

PRISONER

Choices. I had choices once. And then...slipped in the shower, done broke my neck. But that's life, things just happen. You're hit by a car, you get cancer, the toaster goes and burns down your house...

(after a long beat)

How'd I get here? I fell in love. Sounds like a sorry ass reason for an excuse, but be careful whatcha wish for. Nothin's dumber than a girl in puppy love. Except maybe a husband with the TV clicker.

She laughs and lights a cigarette.

PRISONER

Sure you got the stomach for this? Cause this ain't no damn video game. It just ain't.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BROWARD COUNTY, FLA. - A SERIES OF SHOTS

Despite the exotic presence of palm trees wilting in the humidity, this is Strip Mall America. Kids mill about. Skateboarding, smoking, sulking away from adults. We stop at a supermarket, PUBLIX, the Vons of Florida.

INT. PUBLIX MARKET DELI COUNTER - LATER

Lean and blond, JAY FERGUSON, 17, builds sandwiches under a blowing fan. Gold CRUCIFIX necklace, untied AirWalks, and hip-hop haircut all take a backseat to natural charm.

JAY

Hey, man. My Mom needed her car. Can you give me a lift home later?

BOBBY KENT, 18, massive under his form-fitted Polo shirt, takes his sweet time to answer. Bobby's black hair is slicked forward in nasty little points.

BOBBY

Maybe. If you do my side-work.

Jay groans.

ALI (O.S.)
Excuse me? Sandwich Boy?

QUICKLY TO THE COUNTER. Waiting for food are ALI WILLIS, 17, and CASSIE KUHN, 16. Pretty, petite, and an ass straight from Cosmo, Ali couldn't be more different from the chubby, freckled Cassie and her red greasy hair.

ALI
You gonna put on gloves? I mean, who knows where those hands have been.

Bobby simulates masturbation on her food. Ali smiles and shakes her head, 'cause boys will be boys.

BOBBY
Whatcha doin' tonight, little lamb?
You wanna go to a party?

ALI
Maybe. Where at?

BOBBY
Come back at seven and we'll cruise.
It's supposed to be totally sick.

ALI
We'll think about it.

BOBBY
Great, babe, you can be my date.
Fergie here's a three pump chump, but he digs the full-figured gals.

Miffed, they exit. Jay isn't too happy either.

JAY
How come I never get the hot one?

BOBBY
How come I'm always driving your sorry ass around? Come on, man, some things you're just better at. Like jumping on the grenade.

CUT TO:

INT. MALL - STEADY ON THE GIRLS

Wearing hot pink Oakley Blades, Ali sucks a milkshake dry as she hauls bags of new clothes.

Cassie carries nothing. Listening to them reminds us that Florida is truly in the South.

ALI
Guys are all like that, holmes. The other guy, the smaller one...

CASSIE
Jay Ferguson. He is fine.

ALI
You know him?

CASSIE
Last year, at Embassy Lakes Mall, I saw both those guys get arrested for shopliftin'.

Without losing stride, Ali drops her shake to the ground.

ALI
He acted like he wanted to meet you.

CASSIE
Meet you, you mean.

ALI
Maybe, but his buddy's got dibs on me. He's the boss. You heard. Ferg likes big girls. So? You're big. So good.

CASSIE
I've never been around a boy who was that much of...you know, a hunk.

Ali laughs at her.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Seated in the sand, a fawning Cassie watches Jay pound a bottle of Jose Cuervo. Gangsta rap drones in the b.g. With second thoughts, Jay scans the parking lot. Bobby's car, a truly BITCHIN' CAMARO, rocks violently.

Jay turns back--and is MAULED. Cassie's an animal, oblivious, tongue like a cruise missile. Jay's paralyzed with indecision...until she strokes his crotch.

Fuck it, he's getting laid. He tugs down his shorts.

CASSIE
Wait. Hold on.

JAY

It's just for a second. Then we'll stop. I promise.

CASSIE

There never was no party, was there?

JAY

What, this ain't a party?

She smiles, charmed. She spreads her thighs and struggles with her undies. No time to waste, he just pulls them aside and ENTERS her.

Jay pumps and pumps and...uh, oh. He's done. But his shame isn't quite so premature. Jay tries to withdraw, but she clings for dear life, stars in her eyes.

Suddenly LAUGHTER fills the air. Bobby stands over them.

BOBBY

You should see a specialist for that.

Jay covers her, mortified. Cassie squeals as if to hide, secretly delighted with all the attention.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MESSY BEDROOM - MORNING

Plastered on the wall is a shrine culled from MAGAZINE ADS. Runway models and the rippled men who love them. In bold print is the excerpt: WHAT WOMEN WANT.

Cassie lies in bed, smiling at her shrine, joining her Walkman's furious melody: NWA's "Gangsta, Gangsta."

CASSIE

"...somethin' 'bout a nigga like me, never shoulda been let out the penitentiary..."

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - LATER

Cassie bounces happily along, still with her Walkman.

CASSIE

"...I'm the motherfucker thatcha readin' about. Takin' a life or two, that's what the hell I do, you don't like howum livin', well FUCK YOU!"

All said with a smile.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Statuettes of the Blessed Mother. Splayed on the couch, a hungover Jay watches a brutal FOOTBALL COLLISION on TV. His mother enters, in a hurry.

MRS. FERGUSON

You can slide this time...only cause you'll stink up the whole church. But you hafta read Corinthians on your own. Deal?

JAY

When can we get another car?

MRS. FERGUSON

I don't know, Loverbug. I'm trying.

Jay groans as she kisses him.

MRS. FERGUSON

I got singin' group afterwards so--

JAY

--I'm fucking stranded here?

MRS. FERGUSON

Jay! Not on Sunday!

The DOORBELL RINGS. She moves to answer it.

JAY

You consider my plan, yet?

MRS. FERGUSON (O.S.)

We'll talk about it later.

JAY

Yeah, yeah. I know. You're late.

Jay scarfs a powdered donut. A strange exchange draws Jay's attention to the front door. IT'S CASSIE.

JAY

(mouth full)

Fuck me.

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Bathed in pot smoke and sweat, Jay rolls off of Cassie.

CASSIE

I'm gonna be bowlegged for weeks.

Jay grins, having reclaimed his pride.

CASSIE

Hey. What's all that stuff?

Across the room is a TURNTABLE STAND and SPEAKERS.

JAY

I'm practicing to be a DJ.

CASSIE

What, like, on the radio?

JAY

Nah, like Moby. In nightclubs. I got almost two thousand records.

CASSIE

What kind of music?

JAY

Depends. I mix in different shit. Dark disco, mid-tempo hip-hop, Chicago house. Sometimes I really trick it out...layer some Motown shit atop of London trance. Y'know?

CASSIE

Wow, sounds awesome.

JAY

I'm gonna rock people's worlds.

CASSIE

Gonna? Why not now?

JAY

I'm still learning. Bobby says I need a few more years.

CASSIE

Well, Bobby said you were a three pump chump. We know now he's fulla shit.

He looks at her, puzzled. She really cares.

PRISONER (O.S.)
Flattery.

CUT TO:

INT. NONDESCRIPT ROOM - THE PRISONER

She stares straight ahead.

PRISONER
 Best way to put the fish on the hook.
 Make a man feel he's worth his salt
 and he'll hang around long enough to
 ruin your life.

(she laughs)
 This went on for months. We were both
 drop-outs. We could afford to sleep
 'til noon, smoke grass, screw like
 bunnies. I loved him from Day One,
 but I shoulda known it wouldn't last.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - TIGHT ON JAY

A phonograph NEEDLE skates across dusty vinyl. Hands
 dance across knobs and levers. Jay's at his TURNTABLES.

PRISONER (V/O)
 He was going places. He had talent.

And it starts: throbbing, industrial harmonies. Plane
 crashes twisted into music. Jay overlaps a second record
 --melody like a breeze. A third--Delta blues riff with a
 Baptist choir. He alternately SCRATCHES two records;
 he's truly skilled. Jay was born for this.

Cassie watches, headphones on, grinning, grooving. Jay
 looks past her to his bedside ALARM CLOCK. It reads
 3:15. The needle SCRATCHES like the bombing of Dresden.
 Cassie shakes out her ears and sees his dire expression.

CASSIE
 What?

JAY
 I'm dead.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Cassie tries to keep pace with Jay's brisk march. He's
 got his gym bag. A dog BARKS in the near distance.

JAY

Cassie, I think you should go.

CASSIE

Why? Can't Bobby give me a ride?

They continue, right up to Bobby's DRIVEWAY. A beautiful RED DOBERMAN snarls from the side gate. Bobby's at his Camaro, dressed for the gym, pissed.

BOBBY

Two blocks. You live two blocks down and you're still twenty minutes late.
(noticing)
And you're fucking stoned.

CASSIE

Is that your Doberman, Bobby?

BOBBY

It sure is, Shamu.
(she's speechless).
He's trained to kill whales. One time, my fat cousin, looks a little like you, she got her face chewed off.

Cassie looks ready to cry. Jay comes to her defense.

JAY

Very funny, dude.

BOBBY

It is funny. See for yourself, stoner. Go play with the dog.

Jay smirks, as if Bobby's joking. Bobby isn't.

BOBBY

You blow me off for fuckin' weeks for this hideous, fat bitch?

JAY

Look, man, I'm--

BOBBY

Apology not accepted. Play with the fucking dog.

JAY

Come on. Not in front of her.

BOBBY

Play with my dog, buttfuck. Now.

Humiliated, Jay looks to Cassie and starts for the gate.

CASSIE

Jay?

BOBBY

Start swimmin', bitch! Before I
harpoon your fat ass!

Cassie cowers from Bobby and walks away. She turns for Jay's response, but he's already shuffling to his doom.

Cassie hurries away, faster and faster. The gate CREAKS and the dog BARKS. She stops at a blood curdling SCREAM.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S BATHROOM - A BLOOD-STAINED SINK

Jay's forearm is a mess. He throws another bloody wad of tissue in the toilet and returns the Peroxide to the mirrored cabinet, his reflection hating him.

INT. JAY'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Jay finds Mrs. Ferguson coming through the front door.

MRS. FERGUSON

Hey, Loverbug...what's wrong?

JAY

Please. My plan. I'll go anywhere.
I'll...I'll get a job.

MRS. FERGUSON

A job?! Jaybird, are you okay?
(lips to his forehead)
There's Theraflu in the kitchen.

Exasperated, he sighs. She spots his DOG BITE.

MRS. FERGUSON

Loverbug, your arm!

JAY

Don't! Just don't! All I ask is we
bail this low-budget town!

MRS. FERGUSON

We're back to this again?

He storms off, leaving his mother overwhelmed.

INT. BEDROOM - TIGHT ON JAY

Frustrated, he grinds his molars. The door gently opens.

MRS. FERGUSON (O.S.)
I'm no fortune teller, Jay. I can't
up and breeze from my job just 'cause.

Mrs. Ferguson joins him at the foot of his bed.

MRS. FERGUSON
Why won't you talk to me?

JAY
You make me feel like a broken record.
"Can we move, get a car? Can we move?
Get a car...?"

Mrs. Ferguson looks at Jay's DJ equipment.

MRS. FERGUSON
Most kids get the car, then the
stereo.
(sniffs)
Did you spill something in here?

Jay is too busy sulking.

MRS. FERGUSON
Look, Jaybird, if you're havin'
problems, runnin' won't solve 'em.
It's best in life to tackle things
head on. Right? I mean, put yourself
in His shoes. What would Jesus do?

Jay groans.

CUT TO:

INT. VINTAGE RECORD STORE - AFTERNOON

Korn blasts. Jay mulls through records, wishing to add
to his collection. Cassie tags along.

CASSIE
Can I ask you something, Jay?

JAY
I guess.

CASSIE
Why do you let Bobby treat you so bad?
Like that stuff with the dog.

JAY

(a heavy sigh)
Cassie, Bobby and me...this shit... it
goes back to when we're kids. I've
always kinda been like the guinea pig.

CASSIE

You can't do anything?

JAY

I've tried. For years I've tried.
But my Mom doesn't listen.

CASSIE

You could leave. Yourself.

JAY

How? And with what, Cass? I ain't
even a high school graduate.

CASSIE

Tell me about it.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVING BUS - DAY

With his GYM BAG, Jay stares at his dismal surroundings.

INT. CROWDED GYM - LATER

Jay bench presses two plates and struggles with one more
rep. Suddenly, Bobby appears right overhead. Grinning.

Jay braces himself as best he can. But Bobby's
malevolence changes. Bobby drops his bag to spot him.

BOBBY

Push it. Good. Way to fuckin' go.

Jay gets up and glares at Bobby.

BOBBY

Good job, "Ah-nold."

Bobby's smile makes Jay feel a bit stupid and hostile.

BOBBY

You could be putting up another fifty
pounds at least, man.

(grabbing his bag)

Come on. Follow me.

Jay hesitates.

INT. GYM BATHROOM - CONTINUE ACTION

Jay enters and Bobby motions him, unnoticed, into a STALL. From his bag, Bobby produces a HYPODERMIC NEEDLE.

JAY

Oh, man, you do that stuff? That shit'll mess you up.

BOBBY

You know who says that shit?

JAY

Doctors?

BOBBY

Fags! They're jealous. Steroids make you more of a man. Makes your balls bigger. That's a medical fact.

JAY

I thought it messed up your Wood.

BOBBY

Man, this shit turns poodles into pitbulls. You watch, a few weeks from now, your 90 pound ass is gonna look like a brick shithouse.

JAY

I don't know, dude.

BOBBY

Trust me, Ferg. I'm your best friend.

After an uncomfortable moment, Jay pulls up his sleeve.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PUBLIX MARKET DELI COUNTER - DAY

Jay stocks fresh bread while Bobby uses the meat slicer.

BOBBY

(gesturing, singing)

"The freaks come out at night. The freaks come out at night..."

JAY'S POV. A MAN, clearly mentally challenged, shops across the aisle. Suddenly-- A LOAF OF BREAD flies into frame, banging into the man's head.

Behind him, Jay finds Bobby crouched and laughing. Jay turns back to the man, now scowling at Jay. Jay offers a polite smile as Bobby LOUDLY imitates a retarded guy.

JAY
(tosses his apron)
I'm taking lunch.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUBLIX SUPERMARKET - DAY

Lunch on his lap, Jay eats alone at the end of a bench.

GIRL (O.S.)
Hey.

Jay looks up. A pretty GIRL with a rocket body stands before him. There must be some confusion.

GIRL
You work out at my gym, right?

JAY
Oh, yeah, you teach a class there.

GIRL
Just for summer. In August I go back to Florida State.

JAY
That's cool. I'm Jay.

GIRL
I know. I'm Shannon.

Beat. They share a smile. She's adorable.

INSIDE THE STORE - BOBBY POV

He scowls through the glass.

BACK WITH JAY AND SHANNON. She's now sitting with him.

SHANNON
Well, it's not just time in the gym.
It's diet, it's cross-training.

JAY
Like rock climbing, mountain biking...

SHANNON

Exactly. I rollerblade at South Beach
a lot. You wanna go with me sometime?

Jay smiles at her, stunned. He would love it. And then
Bobby brings the world crashing with him.

BOBBY

Yo, your girlfriend just called.

Jay stares up at him, incredulity gives way to horror.

BOBBY

Says she's only got 40 more pounds to
go, so fire up for a romantic night.

(to Shannon)

You should see his chick. Shammie?
What a trooper.

SHANNON

Well, I uh, I should get going.
Nice to meet you, Jay.

She leaves. Jay's face says it all. With each swivel of
her perfect backside, his frustration mounts.

BOBBY

Typical, huh? What a cunt.

Jay wraps up his lunch.

BOBBY

C'mon, man! I was bustin' your balls.

JAY

That was the worst cockblock of all
fuckin' times.

BOBBY

Don't blame me 'cause you're goin' out
with a moose!

JAY

We're not goin' out!

BOBBY

Bullshit! Word is out, Jay.
I heard some chicks at Pizza Hut.
They were like, "did you hear?"

JAY

You're making this up.

BOBBY

Am I? You know how people feed off
shit like this. Can't you see it?
"Newsflash: Ferg Fucks Fatties."

JAY

This sucks.

BOBBY

Declare war, man. Protect your rep.

JAY

What do you mean? Dump her?

BOBBY

If you wanna get laid in the state of
Florida ever again? Cold turkey, bro.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - A FULL LENGTH MIRROR - DAY

Fade up on Jay in his underwear, injecting himself with a
HYPODERMIC NEEDLE, flexing. Steroid zits cover his ass
and back. The phone is RELENTLESS.

MRS. FERGUSON (O.S.)

Jay! The telephone!

JAY

I'm not here, Mom!

MRS. FERGUSON (O.S.)

How long is this gonna go on?

JAY

I'M NOT HERE!

Straight off the deep end, Jay wedges his undies up his
crack like a G-string. He clenches his ass, impressed.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - TIGHT ON CASSIE

She's on the floor, cordless phone in hand, breathing
hard. She stares into the TOILET. Saliva drools from
her lips. Panning up and away, we stop at a poster of an
EMBRACING COUPLE in Paris. Cassie sounds like death.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DARKENED LIVING ROOM - THE TELEVISION

A grim-faced reporter stands in a park playground, on the edge of a CRIME SCENE. Yellow tape blocks him off.

REPORTER

...at least one victim was pronounced
dead on the scene...

From the TV we cross a sea of junk food trash to a pair of exhausted, hollow EYES peeking from a ratty blanket.

With a GUST of SUNLIGHT, the front door opens. Cassie's mother, a burly garbage dispatcher, arrives from work.

MRS. KUHN

What in Sam Hell is goin' on around here?

(after a beat)

Cassie, this is a pigstye! Two weeks. You haven't moved a muscle 'cept to raid the fridge and clog my toilet.

CASSIE

I'm sick, Ma.

MRS. KUHN

Sick, my foot. It took effort to get this place like this.

(to the TV)

Ain't that the park up the street?

CASSIE

Somebody shot someone somewhere.

MRS. KUHN

That's why traffic was so slow.

She shifts, kicking aside a Mr. Pibb can.

MRS. KUHN

Cassie! All day I deal with trash. In the yard, on the trucks, from the guys. I refuse to put up with--
(looking to the coffee table)
Were those my Funyuns?

CASSIE

They were stale, Ma!

Mrs. Kuhn sighs and walks into the dirty kitchen.

MRS. KUHN
Is this about that "hunk" of your's?

CASSIE
No, Ma. It's nothin'.

MRS. KUHN
Fine, Cass. I'm learnin' to expect
"nothin'." But y'got friends. Find
one, young lady. Talk. Cause if you
don't unbottle what's eatin' you up,
I'll pull the cork out myself.

TIGHT ON CASSIE. Contemplating.

CASSIE (O.S.)
Girl, where you been? Ever since that
night, you been the Invisible Bitch.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALI'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Inside a candlelit pentagram, Ali talks on the phone and
pours hot wax on her subservient beau, DONNY SEMENEC, 17.

ALI
It's a long story. You still chillin'
with that guy? What's his name, Matt?

INT. CASSIE'S BEDROOM - INTERCUT THE CONVERSATION

Her shrine of studs looms behind her.

CASSIE
Jay. No, not lately. I been calling
and stuff, but he's never home.

ALI
That sucks. Guys are shit with shoes.

CASSIE
Tell me about it. I can't eat, can't
sleep, nothin'. When I do get up, I
go to the john and barf out my guts.

ALI
No shit?

CASSIE
No shit. Like a hose.

ALI
Dude, are you using protection? I know you ain't on The Pill.

CASSIE
Protection?

ALI
Jimmies. Rubbers. Condoms.

CASSIE
Naw, Jay's allergic to those things.

ALI
Yeah, right. Girl, your ass is knocked up.

CASSIE
No way, he always goes on my stomach.

ALI
You moron, that's how it happens. How d'ya think I had my baby?

CASSIE
For reals?

ALI
Fuckin' A, bitch. When's your period?

CASSIE
Oh no.

ALI
Clock's tickin', holmes. You gotta find the deadbeat and shake him down.

CASSIE
How?

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. KUHN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Cassie opens a dresser drawer and ignores a small, oily looking .25 BERETTA for a crumpled ten dollar bill.

INT. CASSIE'S BATHROOM - LATER

Some new MAKEUP and a single ROSE on the counter. In the mirror, Cassie cakes on her version of "pretty."

CUT TO:

INT. DNA COMIC STORE - AFTERNOON

Cassie's cousin, DEREK DZVIRKO, 20, is the Mozart of MORTAL KOMBAT. Overweight with a feeble mustache, he plays with aggression as two 11-year-olds watch in awe.

ON THE SCREEN. The video character yanks a pulsing, blood-squirting HEART from his victim's chest.

BOY #1
Eat it! Eat his heart, Derek!

COUSIN DEREK
Hey, asshole! I don't know how to eat his heart! Nobody does!

BOY #2
My brother does!

COUSIN DEREK
You are so full of shit!

BOY #2
I've fuckin' seen him!

COUSIN DEREK
Hey, man, I just played two hours on one quarter. I shocked this guy's head off and ripped this dickhead's heart out. What more do you want?

CASSIE (O.S.)
Hey, Derek? I need a ride.

PAN QUICKLY TO CASSIE. All dolled up, the ROSE in hand.

BOY #1
No way! He just shocked a guy's dick off!

BOY #2
Who the hell are you?

CASSIE
I'm his cousin, dipshit. Derek, I need a ride. I'm pregnant.

They all stare. Finally, Derek exits with her, leaving the boys to fight over the controls.

ON THE TRACK-- A FAMILIAR CACKLING.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S EMPTY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Faintly filling the house are other SOUNDS. Animalistic. Panting and grunting. We follow the growing noise through empty rooms and halls, into--

INT. MRS. FERGUSON'S BEDROOM - THE BED

A shirtless Bobby has Jay pinned chest down, face yanked up. TV light flickers in Jay's face as Bobby cackles.

BOBBY

You ain't uncomfortable! Look!
(violently)

Open 'em, you faker! You love this!

Jay opens his eyes and we see the source of grunts. On top of the VCR is a VHS CASE that reads: Rough Boys.

ON THE TELEVISION. An orgy of slick muscle and leather. Twisted, tanned, throbbing. Gay men.

BOBBY

Your cock hard, you faggot?! You like this shit, Jay, I know it. Tell me!

JAY

You're sick!

BOBBY

You love it! Say it and you can go!

JAY

Fuck you!

Jay wriggles away, but Bobby rides him to the floor with a THUD and SLAMS Jay's face straight into the carpet.

BOBBY

What's this, Ferg? You fighting back?
All I wanna hear's three words and
I'll let you up. "You're a homo."

Slowly, Jay mumbles something.

BOBBY

Louder, motherfucker!

JAY

"I'm a homo."

Bobby gets up with a cackle.

BOBBY

I knew it! I knew you were suspect!
I should report this or something.

Jay stands and his lip is BLOODIED. Bobby's smugness evaporates. RIGHT THEN-- a BANGING on the front door.

INT. JAY'S HOUSE - THE FRONT DOOR

More banging. Jay creeps forward, a shirt to his lip.

CASSIE (O.S.)

Jay?! Please, open up! I gotta talk
to you! This is life and death! I
swear! Jay, I'm pregnant!

Jay goes sheet white.

EXT. JAY'S PORCH - SAME

Cassie's about to give up when the door opens. Jay emerges and Cassie's eyes bulge with concern.

CASSIE

Ohmigod, honey. Are you okay?

JAY

You're pregnant?
(she nods, beaming)
Are you uh, is it mine?

She looks at him, hurt.

JAY

I'm sorry. Really. That was shitty.
(after a beat)
How much money do we need?

CASSIE

Money?

JAY

Shit yes, Cassie. An abortion costs
like 300 bucks.

CASSIE

Well, I thought, maybe, you know...

JAY

What? I'm not ready to be a Dad,
Cassie.

BOBBY

(suddenly emerging)

You don't want a little Shamu running around, Ferg? All big and blubbery?

A teary-eyed Cassie waits for Jay's defense. There isn't any. She drops the ROSE and heads back to the truck.

Jay is at a loss. Bobby starts after her.

BOBBY

Hey, Cassie?

She stops, confused at the sound of her name.

JAY

Bobby. Don't.

With a counterfeit smile, Bobby closes in.

BOBBY

We are talking abortion here, right?
'Cause either a doctor does it or I'll punch you in the stomach myself.

CASSIE

How...how are we gonna get 300 bucks?

BOBBY

Not we, you. Rob a bank if you gotta.

Cassie shoots a teary-eyed look to Jay.

BOBBY

You. Understand? And if you try to make it Ferg's problem, I'll make sure he never talks to your fat ass again.

CUT TO:

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - MOVING

Cousin Derek watches Cassie. She's a wreck.

COUSIN DEREK

Come over to our place. We'll play Monopoly.

CASSIE

I don't wanna play fucking Monopoly!

COUSIN DEREK

You love Monopoly.

CASSIE

Take me back to the mall, Derek! I gotta find some money! I'm pregnant! Do you understand what that means?!

COUSIN DEREK

Yeah, but, maybe not really.

CASSIE

It means I gotta handle it myself!

CUT TO:

INT. MALL - STEADY ON CASSIE

Her make-up has bled so now people stare. She wipes her face, steeling herself as she reaches a group of girls.

CASSIE

Hey, man, I'm pregnant. I gotta get an abortion. Can you spare some cash?

GIRL

I got like four dollars you can have.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Distracted, Cassie plods home, headlights flashing into her eyes. Then she blindly crosses to a PARK. On a tree, there's a small strip of something. She discovers that it's YELLOW POLICE TAPE. It reads: DO NOT CROSS.

She realizes she's walked into the CRIME SCENE from TV earlier. She looks back to the tape, thoughts racing.

CUT TO:

INT. PIZZA HUT - DAY

Cassie enters and stands before Jay, alone at a table, sipping a huge Coke.

CASSIE

I've got an idea.

JAY

So does Bobby. He's got a plan to get us outta this whole "baby" mess.

CASSIE

How nice for you two.

JAY

Come on, Cass. We need his help. I mean, we're all in this together.

CASSIE

How are you friends with him? Like, he hits you and disses you to your face. In front of strangers even.

JAY

Cassie, if I don't follow him...

Jay shakes his head and sips his coke.

CASSIE

You know what, Jay? I love you.
(he freezes)
I do. And I never thought it'd hurt so much.

JAY

Cassie--

CASSIE

And I hate seeing you suffer. Isn't there some way to stop him?

JAY

Sure, there's a way.

CASSIE

Well...that's what I been thinking. And I know you wouldn't mind seeing him gone.

JAY

Are you insane?

CASSIE

I think it makes sense.

JAY

(nervous laughter)
You're nuts. Totally fuckin' nuts.

CASSIE

At least you'd be free.

A cute PIZZA HUT employee, CLAUDIA, 15, comes over with drops off his single slice.

CLAUDIA
Hey, Cassie, my boss just split. You
guys want a free salad before I go?

BOBBY (O.S.)
You can toss my salad.

From behind her, Bobby grabs her HAT.

BOBBY
What's your name, little lamb?

CLAUDIA
I've met you in here like, five times.

BOBBY
Well, tonight I remember.

Claudia's hostility is replaced by a sudden attraction.

BOBBY
We're all goin' on a top secret
mission. When do you punch out?

Jay and Cassie can't fathom how he gets away with it.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKED CAMARO - NIGHT

Jay and Bobby hit a pot pipe and hand it back. Cassie
holds her stomach, refusing, so Claudia puffs away.

BOBBY
Okay. Let's do this.
(to Cassie)
Keep this motherfucker running. You
sure you can negotiate this sombitch?

CASSIE
No problem.

With purpose, Jay and Bobby exit. Cassie, suddenly very
thrilled, crawls up front and tests the gas with a ROAR.

CLAUDIA
(exhaling smoke)
So what's this "secret mission?"

EXT. DESOLATE PARKING LOT - SAME

Jay and Bobby weave between cars. Bobby stops.

BOBBY

Over here. Some dumb cunt left her purse in plain view. Come on.

Jay dangles a SPARK PLUG by an electrical cord and WHIPS it into a car window. GLASS SHATTERS.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMARO - MOVING - NIGHT

Bobby drives, oblivious to Jay's depression. The Geto Boys pound through the speakers.

BOBBY

Eighty bucks cash, a hundred more in shit we can pawn off. In one stop.

IN THE BACK--Claudia leans on Cassie.

CLAUDIA

That weed was gnarly, Cassie.

CASSIE

Bobby always gets the killer chronic.

Claudia struggles to poke her head out Bobby's window.

BOBBY

You crazy bitch, what are you doing?

Claudia doesn't make it and VOMITS all over. Specks plaster Bobby's face and he hits the brakes.

EXT. DESOLATE STREET - TIGHT ON BOBBY

His eyes and veins bulge. Claudia stumbles out.

BOBBY

It got in my mouth! It got in my mouth!

JAY

Chill, Bob! We're tokin' bowls, the music's loud, you drive like shit!

Bobby looks homicidal. Claudia heaves into some hedges as Cassie pulls her hair from her face. She looks back.

CASSIE'S POV. Bobby jabs a finger into Jay as they keep looking over. Jay approaches her, falsely calm.

Cassie KNOWS SOMETHING'S UP.

JAY
Everything's cool, guys. He's
chilled. We're gonna take you home.

CASSIE
Wait a minute.

Cassie takes Claudia out of earshot.

BOBBY
Hey! What the fuck, Shamu?!

CASSIE
I'm talking to my friend! Chill!
(then, to Claudia)
Hey. Don't get in the car. Bobby's
gonna do something to you.

CLAUDIA
"Do something?"

CASSIE
Rape you. Beat the fuck out of you.
I dunno, but it'll be bad. Trust me.

BOBBY
Hey, you beast!

CASSIE
Go, Claudia. Now.

The girls watch Bobby coming. So does Jay.

BOBBY
What are you saying about me?!

CASSIE
Go, Claudia! Run!

Claudia backpedals down an embankment.

BOBBY
The fuck you say to her, Shamu?!

Bobby pulls Cassie to the ground by her hair.

BOBBY
This is the thanks I get?!

TIGHT ON JAY. Drowning in adrenaline.

Cassie puts up a fight, screaming, CLAWING Bobby's hand. Bobby cries out and CLOCKS her in the eye. Jay steps forward. Bobby straightens.

BOBBY
Feelin' brave, Ferguson?

Cassie sits up, holding her eye. Bobby moves for Jay. His yellowed eyes are intense, menacing.

BOBBY
Don't forget who your friends are.

And with that, Bobby strands them in the middle of nowhere. The far sounds of a highway fade in.

CASSIE
Why didn't you do nothin'!?
He can't come up with a single syllable.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAY'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Jay stares at Cassie's BLACK EYE. She opens her eyes and kisses him, half-asleep.

CASSIE
What're you thinkin' about?

JAY
How we're gonna kill him.

A smile spreads across her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NONDESCRIPT ROOM - TIGHT ON THE PRISONER

She smokes a cigarette and rubs her forehead.

PRISONER
And that was the tip of the iceberg. Bobby made him dance at the Copa in a pink g-string once. He put up with some real fu... messed up stuff. The shrinks in here, they give it a label like "systematic abuse." But that just makes things easier to put on a shelf and forget.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CASSIE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

In a hideous one-piece bathing suit, Cassie suns herself in a chair and chats on the cordless.

CASSIE

...And everyone gets rid of their problems, because Bobby is everyone's problem. Wanna come down and help?

CUT TO:

INT. DONNY'S SEMENEC'S BEDROOM - EVENING

A room filled with inane pop culture. From the TV we see Ali in her bra, propped back in bed. Boyfriend Donny lies forward, fighting with his Nintendo controller.

DONNY

You're not gonna do that?

ALI

She needs help, so, yeah.

DONNY

No.

ALI

Yeah.

DONNY

Like, kill this guy?

ALI

Yeah.

DONNY

Like, in real life?

ALI

Yeah.

DONNY

No.

ALI

Yeah.

She KICKS the control out of his hand. Donny exclaims and looks back to her. She unsnaps her bra's front.

ALI

I need you on this one, Donny.

Donny crawls back to kiss her and--the PHONE RINGS. She stops him like a traffic cop and snaps up her CELLPHONE like she already knows who it is. DONNY walks out.

ALI

Where are you, you fuckin' bitch?

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - INTERCUT THE CONVERSATION

HEATHER SWALLERS, 15, hollow eyes made worse by blueish hair. Strange long SCARS on her arms. She stoops at a pay telephone, gauges her surroundings.

HEATHER

Rehab. I'm kinda messed up, Ali.

ALI

What drug.

HEATHER

Crack.

ALI

Well, I'm going down to Lauderdale to help my friend Cassie kill this guy. You want me to come and get you?

Ali looks up. Donny wields a SERRATED HUNTING KNIFE.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL ROAD - IN THE TREELINE

Belongings stuffed in a pillowcase, wearing jeans and a beanie, Heather steps clear to meet Ali's Mustang.

INT. MUSTANG - MOVING

As they peel away, Cypress Hill's Insane In The Brain thumping, Heather rubs her hand along Ali's cheek. Ali's kisses it, erotically.

HEATHER

Thanks for getting me, Ali.

ALI

Hey, man, gotta stick with my homies.

From the backseat, a nodding Donny sparks a JOINT.

HEATHER

That joint all you're holdin'?

DONNY
Got a glove box fulla acid.

HEATHER
Anything harder? Any tweak?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PIZZA HUT - TIGHT ON ALI

She addresses the Conspirators. Cassie, Jay, Heather, and Donny dine on pizza and pitchers of Pepsi.

ALI
I'm face-down...naked in the back...
and he's like, totally raping me.

CASSIE
Why didn't you yell for us?

JAY
(remembering)
He had his music on full blast.

ALI
Yep, and when he finished, he wouldn't
lemme up 'til I said I was a dyke.

DONNY
No way.

ALI
Swear to God.

Jay knows she's telling the truth.

DONNY
I'll kill the fucker myself.

Jay smirks, knowing Donny's out of his league. Pizza Hut
Claudia appears over their shoulders.

CLAUDIA
Why are you guys, like, so serious?

CASSIE
We're gonna fix Bobby Kent's ass.

CLAUDIA
(as she exits)
Good.

CASSIE
You guys see what I mean?

DONNY
So, we're like, gonna--

CASSIE
Kill him.

DONNY
Wow, man, that's heavy.

ALI
How are we gonna do it?

Their thinking breeds an unsettling quiet.

HEATHER
We can drive by his house, you know,
when he's out front, like watering the
lawn or some shit, and shoot him down.

JAY
No, somebody would see.

DONNY
We could sneak into his house and stab
the fucker to death. I brought my
survival knife.

JAY
No, he's got a Doberman.

CASSIE
The easiest way is to shoot him.

HEATHER
Where are we gonna get a gun?

TIGHT ON CASSIE. Gears turn in her head.

ALI (O.S.)
Too bad we're not in school. I know a
guy who sells 'em for ten bucks a pop.

CASSIE
I know where we can get one.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Ali's Mustang and the Ferguson family Topaz sit in front.

INT. CASSIE'S BEDROOM - THE CONSPIRATORS

Stoned, they lounge around to ICE-T. Cassie is absent.

JAY

You can't just bonk him on the head
and like, drag him somewhere.

HEATHER

How come?

JAY

He's too big. You haven't met him?

HEATHER

Naw.

DONNY

Me neither. What's he like?

CASSIE (O.S.)

He's a prick.

QUICKLY TO CASSIE. She enters the room, hands behind her back. Slowly, dramatically, she produces the .25 BERETTA from her mother's room. She displays it like a trophy.

DONNY

Holy shit. What's that for?

CASSIE

To kill Bobby. Where you been, man?

Stoned Donny has no idea.

HEATHER

Won't that get blood all over?

Cassie doesn't really know.

EXT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - SAME

The dented Firebird pulls in the drive. Mrs. Kuhn exits with a bag of groceries.

INT. CASSIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Cassie stares at the gun in her hands.

JAY

He's gotta be by himself.

CASSIE
Totally. Killing someone by himself
is like, so much easier.

ALI
Word, holmes. Much easier.

A KNOCK on the door. Cassie hides the gun behind her
back. Mrs. Kuhn pokes her head inside.

MRS. KUHN
You kids up for some popcorn?

A home-run question for the stoned kids.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSIE'S KITCHEN - LATER

A full cube of butter melts in a crusty saucepan. Mrs.
Kuhn makes popcorn the real way, on the stove.

INT. CASSIE'S LIVING ROOM - THE CONSPIRATORS

Out of earshot from Mrs. Kuhn, the sprawled kids watch
MTV and the gun posturing of MASTER P's gang of thugs.

CASSIE
What if Ali offers to like, fuck him?

DONNY
What?

ALI
You mean, like bait?

Cassie nods. Ali likes the idea.

JAY
That's not enough for him to go.

ALI
What if I let him dog out my 5.0 and
then offer to fuck him?

DONNY
Excuse me but--

CASSIE
How's that? He can drive you out to
the barrens in Weston. By the glades.

Everyone nods, even Donny, though he's still confused.

JAY

Wait. If Ali's gonna get laid by Bobby, what's Donny doin' here? I mean, she's gonna drag her boyfriend along? Nobody's that big a dweeb.

They all look to Donny.

HEATHER

You could say they're in a fight.

JAY

No, then why's the loser still around?

Another silence.

DONNY

What if I'm Heather's boyfriend?

The kids are impressed. Donny beams.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jay speaks into the receiver as everyone listens.

JAY

Hey, bro. I'm over at Cassie's. Check it out, guess who's here?

He relays the phone. Ali starts flirting.

ALI

Hey Bobby. What's goin' on?
(after a long beat)
Oh, I don't know. I kind of liked it, actually. I keep thinkin' about it. Maybe we can get together again? Take my five-point-o out and get ballistic?

Ali returns the phone to Jay with a shrug.

INT. BOBBY HOUSE - TIGHT ON BOBBY

Bobby does his homework at his desk.

BOBBY

What the fuck is this shit, Ferg?

JAY (O.S.)

I dunno. She's sure fine, though.

BOBBY
She ain't like, chapped at me?

JAY (O.S.)
Cassie says she thinks you're a stud.

BOBBY
You're over there with Shamu? Sick.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASSIE HOUSE - NIGHT

Jay sits alone on the Topaz hood, watching the other conspirators gathered around the Mustang. Cassie forks over the gun to Ali, dolled-up in a trashy way.

CASSIE
You're in the best position to do it.
You fuck him and right when he's gonna
come, you blow his brains out.

HEATHER
Oh, man! That's cool!

ALI
Nah, you want him dead.

CASSIE
Ali! You said you wanted him dead,
too! It's too risky if I do it. I'd
hafta follow you.

Jay watches her, fascinated as Cassie comes alive.

CASSIE
You just stuff it into your shorts
like this. See? And pull this down.

ALI
Goddamn, that's cold!

CASSIE
You shoot him, we'll ditch the body.

ALI
Fine. Fuck it. Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bobby waits on the front lawn. Hair slicked back, he wears shorts, a white t-shirt and expensive tennis shoes. The Conspirators arrive to greet him.

BOBBY

So? What's the plan?

ALI

Let's go out to Weston and mess around on those new developments, dog out my car or some shit like that.

JAY

(to Heather and Donny)

I'll give you two a ride back.

BOBBY

Wait a second, you're not coming?

JAY

Nah, I'm worked.

BOBBY

What about her?

CASSIE

I'm coming with you.

BOBBY

Oh, man, come on! I don't want your fat bitch out there with us.

ALI

(seductively)

Come on, Bobby. She's my homie. I haven't seen her in a long time. I need to talk to her on the way out.

Bobby relents and gets in the driver's seat.

BOBBY

Whatever. I'm drivin'.

Bobby fires the ignition and barely waits for Cassie to tumble into the backseat before he screeches off.

TIGHT ON JAY. He watches the taillights recede.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - NIGHT

Mounds of dredged fill dirt. The 5.0 fishtails, dodges a dirt mountain, and continues down a path.

INT. MUSTANG - TOTAL DARKNESS

Bobby pulls the car over and smiles at Ali.

ALI

You wanna dog it out some more? It is a "five-point-O."

BOBBY

Fuck the car. What if I dog you out?

He reaches around Ali to pull up her top...

The GUN is just inches away. Ali wriggles away.

ALI

Get real.

Ali gets out of the car. Bobby goes after her.

BOBBY

Get real? I'd rather get a blowjob.

Ali hurries back to Cassie and whispers in panic.

ALI

Take this fucking gun off me! If he finds it, he'll kill us both!

BOBBY

What's the matter with you bitches?

Cassie slides the gun into her shorts and whispers.

CASSIE

Bring him down the road. I'll follow.

Ali turns to Bobby and smiles.

ALI

Okay. You want a blowjob?

Bobby grins. Ali backs him down a path, into blackness. Cassie listens to the fading crunch of their footsteps. Surreptitiously, she pulls out the gun and follows.

CASSIE'S POV. Ten yards away, Ali kneels, pulls Bobby's shorts off his hips, and goes to work.

Sweat beads on Cassie's face as she steps ever closer.
Ali stops sucking. The girls lock eyes.

BOBBY
What is it?

Ali looks up, nervous. Cassie freezes.

ALI
Nothin'.

Bobby gauges her for a second.

BOBBY
Get back to work then.

She does. Bobby relaxes and Cassie moves in for the perfect shot. Takes aim at the back of his head. Her hand trembles, the muzzle almost touching him.

Cassie's trigger finger pulls slowly and...

She lowers the gun, backs away. Ali can't believe it.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSIE'S BEDROOM - TIGHT ON THE TELEVISION

Heather and Donny watch the Miss America Pageant. Jay lies on her bed and stares at the ceiling, ignoring.

DONNY
Check out Miss Texas, Jay. She's so fuckin' hot!

HEATHER
She's beautiful.

She studies her SCARS. Cassie and Ali enter.

JAY
Is he dead?

ALI
Nah. Cassie chickened out.

CASSIE
My ass, I chickened out.

ALI
Then why didn't you shoot the son of a bitch while I was going down on him!

Everyone stops. Donny is too busy with Miss Texas.

JAY

You couldn't do it?

CASSIE

I was right behind him, Ali was doing her thing, and I thought of something. On Homicide, they can take the bullet and trace it to the gun. If I use Ma's gun, they'd know I did it.

HEATHER

So toss it in the ocean. Then they can't trace the bullet.

CASSIE

It's my Ma's. She'd kill me.

HEATHER

You know, you're bullshit, bitch.

CASSIE

Am not.

ALI

Are so.

JAY

This whole thing is bullshit.

The girls fall silent as Jay exits. Donny follows.

DONNY

You guys need professional help.

ALI

Remember when me and Heather worked for that dude a few years back... before we got busted? There was this one client who really dug my shit.

CASSIE

Yeah?. So? What else is new?

ALI

He's a hitman for the Mafia, holmes.

The girls are slightly awed.

CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM - MORNING - MIRROR POV

On a bench, Jay shoulders up the military press.

BOBBY

Ali gave me a blowjob out there last night. And then I fucked her.

JAY

I didn't know you fucked her.

BOBBY

What do you mean?

JAY

Nothin'.

BOBBY

Your pregnant bitch say somethin'?

Jay shakes his head and stands, looking rock hard.

BOBBY

Hey, fuck, man. You look great.

As Bobby adds more weight to the bar, Jay watches, his conscience toying with the angles of betrayal.

BOBBY

The power of steroids.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUAIN HOUSE - A HOT DAY

A large man labors to mow the lawn.

INT. COUSIN DEREK'S HOUSE - SAME

Derek's mother LINDA looks from her sweltering husband to the couch. In a Mortal Kombat t-shirt, her slob son is glued to the TV, wolfing Popeye's fried chicken.

LINDA

When you're finished, I want you to go out and help Richard.

COUSIN DEREK

It's too hot, Ma.

THE PHONE RINGS. Derek doesn't even think about shifting his eyes from the tube. Linda begrudgingly answers it.

LINDA
Hello? Oh, hi Cass. Hold on.

She holds the phone hostage for Derek's attention.

LINDA
I mean it. You're not sitting there
all day while Richard busts his ass.

Unfairly burdened by life, Derek takes his call...

COUSIN DEREK
What?

Derek looks out at Richard, avoiding Mom's scrutiny.

COUSIN DEREK
My truck's broke, so come and get me.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEREK'S HOUSE - ALI'S MUSTANG

Donny keeps on the HORN obnoxiously, despite lawnmowing
Richard's indignation.

RICHARD
DEREK!

Finally, Derek lopes out of the house. A sheepish grin
and a wave for the ol' man.

INT. MUSTANG - MOVING

Donny drives. Derek watches his house fade behind them.

DONNY
Cool shirt, man. I'm into Doom. I
like to drop acid and play.

COUSIN DEREK
That's cool.

DONNY
You got a place to play?

COUSIN DEREK
You got any acid?

A thick as thieves smile.

CUT TO:

INT. DNA COMICS - LATER

The 11-year-old boys from earlier provide commentary.

BOY #1
They're tweaked out!

BOY #2
Blasted, man!

QUICKLY TO COUSIN DEREK AND DONNY. Donny freaks out while battling the monsters. Derek looks at the kids.

COUSIN DEREK
You two. Heckle and Jeckle. Shut the fuck up.

Donny heaves a headless body onto a pointed stake and rips out his heart. The guys grunt with pleasure.

Donny severs another opponent, this time at the waist. Bloody legs quivering, rooted to the ground. The voice on the machine says "FINISH HIM."

COUSIN DEREK
(stopping Donny)
Babality.

DONNY
Babality?

Derek nods. Donny gets so excited he almost throws up.

BOY #1/#2
He's gonna hurl! Shit! Look out!

Donny swallows it back down to everyone's disgust. Derek steps to the game. The boys start chanting "Babality! Babality!" Derek's hands fly at the controls.

TIGHT ON THE SCREEN. The defeated opponent's melting flesh turns green and then PINK...into a NEWBORN BABY!

DONNY
Is babality death?

COUSIN DEREK
(dead serious, on the verge)
It's worse. Way worse. Because you have to live, man. You have to live. And you're a fuckin' baby!

Donny runs outside and pukes.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Conspirators scarf chips. Donny spits his food.

DONNY

Jesus Christ, man. You guys should've seen Derek. He babalized a guy!

JAY

Why don't you close your fucking mouth when you eat?

After a few seconds, Jay goes to the front door.

CASSIE

What's the matter, baby?

JAY

I don't know. I'm thinkin' that this whole thing is a joke.

CASSIE

(coming over)

It's not a joke. I think about how it's gonna be and I get so totally stoked. Sweetie, I've been on the phone with Ali's friend, she talked to this guy, and he's expecting us.

JAY

The hit man?

CASSIE

Yes. It's happening, honey. Ali just has to call Bobby again, right?

ALI

Word.

CASSIE

(continuing to Jay)

Just go to work and make sure he's down. Leave the hitman to us.

CUT TO:

EXT. LARGE HOUSE - LATER

Minus Jay, the Conspirators are gathered outside a brick
11. Ali lays on the Mustang horn. Finally, a large
FIGURE lumbers down the driveway.

CASSIE

Sssh. Here he comes.

DONNY

Wow.

Dressed too young for his 30's, HITMAN fixes his hair.

HITMAN

Jesus shit, lay off the horn! You're
blastin' the whole goddamn
neighborhood. What's shakin' Ali?

Hitman leers at her. Cassie steps forward.

CASSIE

We need to know if you can get those
guns for us, man.

HITMAN

Well, hey, man, I mean, like, I need
better notice than this, you know?
Guns are hard to come by, just by
snapping your fingers and shit. Plus,
they're not exactly free, you know?

CASSIE

I can get you some money.

HITMAN

Oh yeah? Whose piggy bank you rob?

ALI

Trust us.

Hitman looks Ali up and down. He digs her.

HITMAN

Why use a gun?

CASSIE

I don't know. Just seemed like an
easy way to do it.

HITMAN

I think maybe you need to chill out
and plan this a little better.

A few of them nod in agreement.

CASSIE

No! I want it done now, goddamn it!
I want this sonofabitch dead tonight!

Cassie is a changed girl.

HITMAN

Look, maybe I can help, I don't know.
First you gotta get some weapons and
figure out a better plan and shit.
Then you can call me later when you're
ready. But next time, lay off the
fuckin' horn. There's a window in the
rear, I'll be there, just rap lightly.

DONNY

Like Tom Sawyer, right?

Everyone stares at Donny in amazement.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUBLIX SUPERMARKET - DAY

With a deep breath, Jay enters the automatic doors.

INT. PUBLIX MARKET DELI COUNTER - SAME

Jay enters, wrapping an apron around himself. Bobby's
waiting, checking his watch.

BOBBY

You're late.

Jay says nothing, waiting for the explosion.

BOBBY

Hurry up before Mr. Tyler gets back.
I'll cover for you.

Jay: a confused gratitude.

INT. PUBLIX MARKET DELI COUNTER - LATER

Jay and Bobby make sandwiches together.

BOBBY

That Ali chick called again. Says
you're goin' with them back out to
Weston. Ferg?

Jay cuts a sandwich in half with a SERRATED KNIFE.

JAY
Yeah, that's the plan.

BOBBY
Are you gonna go?

Jay shrugs, his skepticism at the surface.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Cassie, Ali, Donny, Heather, and Cousin Derek enter to a pissed Mrs. Kuhn.

MRS. KUHN
How dare you leave our house in this condition! I want these people out. What are you doing here, anyway, Ali? Don't you have a baby to take care of?

CASSIE
She's on her way back, Ma.

MRS. KUHN
Get your stuff and go then. Y'all aren't welcome here after the mess I found. You don't work, you don't go to school, you just eat and eat and eat. You know how that makes me feel?

DONNY
Mad?

CUT TO:

EXT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Ali, Heather, and Donny -- an unceremonious exit.

INT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Mrs. Kuhn looks to cousin Derek.

MRS. KUHN
You're not with Ali, are you?

Derek shakes his head. Not unless he goes on a diet.

MRS. KUHN

No, you got some common sense. When we lived in the Bronx, at least we had family. Family kept things tight. Down here, in Florida, nobody's tight. Everybody's just..."whatever."

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Jay and Bobby walk up the sidewalk towards the Camaro. Jay stares hopelessly at his feet.

JAY

300 bucks. Might as well be 3000.

BOBBY

Face it, Ferg, you're jinxed. Check it out, yo.

The RETARDED MAN from earlier passes them, groceries in his arms. Jay senses Bobby's malice.

BOBBY

Hey, big guy? Wanna play some catch?

The Man looks confused. Bobby motions with the ball.

BOBBY

Yeah, you, how about some...catch?

The man shakes his head, attempts to continue.

BOBBY

C'mon, it's simple, see. I take the ball and throw, right?

(cocks his arm)

And you...CATCH.

And Bobby HURLS the ball into the Man's face. The Man reacts. His groceries slip. Bobby gleefully retrieves the ball. Jay is horrified.

BOBBY

C'mon, dontcha know how to catch?

The Man struggles with his bags. Bobby FIRES again--

The man loses the handle on his stuff completely. Groceries tumble everywhere.

BOBBY

Maybe it's me. Here, take a shot,
Jay. See if you can't do better.

TIGHT ON JAY. The ball feels like it weighs a ton.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Do it, Fergie.

Jay steps around some BROKEN EGGS. Huddling over his groceries, the man cowers, hands up in a meager defense.

RETARDED MAN

Please, I, I'm...sorry.

Jay's face is a twisted mask of confusion and pain.

JAY

I'm not gonna hurt you.

RETARDED MAN

Sorry!

JAY

I'm not gonna hurt you.

RETARDED MAN

I'm sorry!

JAY

AND I'M NOT GONNA HURT YOU!

BOBBY

DO IT, FERG!

The hunched man wails. Jay snaps and HUMS the ball at him. The man falls flat into his groceries.

BOBBY

It's not you. Maybe it's the ball.

The man shivers, covered in blood and egg.

BOBBY

Oh, shit, I see. He's a fuckin' retard. Fergie, that ain't fair.

TIGHT ON JAY. Drained. Filled with self-hate.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. JAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jay steps from the Camaro, FOOTBALL in hand.

BOBBY

So what's your deal tonight? You
wanna just catch a movie instead?

Jay studies the football and tosses it back to Bobby.

JAY

Let's get wasted.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As Cassie listens on the phone, Mrs. Kuhn opens the door.
Cassie reflexively covers the mouthpiece.

MRS. KUHN

I'm going to Arby's! Want anything?

Cassie shakes her head. Her mother closes the door.

CASSIE

What do you mean, your usual mob
source is out of town?!

INT. LARGE KITCHEN - TIGHT ON THE MAFIA HITMAN

He enjoys a frozen waffle and a Budweiser.

HITMAN

This ain't a sanctioned hit so like,
my normal suppliers don't wanna get
involved. I'll come supervise and
shit, but you still got a weapons
problem. How big's this guy?

(listens)

Okay, you're probably gonna need two
baseball bats then.

EXT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Mrs. Kuhn's Firebird disappears down the street. Ali,
Donny, and Heather appear from the shrubbery.

INT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Derek watches TV on the couch. Excited, Cassie joins him
as Ali, Donny and Heather re-enter.

CASSIE

Jay just got home. It's all set.
We're going to Bobby's in 45 minutes.
Derek, what's happening with the bats?
(Derek shrugs)
Did my Ma say somethin' to you?

COUSIN DEREK

Nah. Everything's cool, I guess.
I'll call the guy again.

CASSIE

Okay. Just one thing left to do then.

ALI

What's that?

CASSIE

The Hitman needs a ride.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSTANG - MOVING

Hitman rides up front with Ali. Donny, Heather, and Cassie crammed in the back.

CASSIE

I can't wait to stab that
motherfucker. Slit his throat and
bleed him like the pig he is.

All of them nod and laugh, almost like it's not real.

DONNY

If you won't, I will. I'll cut that
fucker for you. Right, Ali?

ALI

So weird. This shit is so weird.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jay grabs a RED BANDANA from a turntable and looks into
the MIRROR.

EXT. JAY'S HOUSE - THE DRIVEWAY

The Conspirators kick it at Ali's 5.0. Donny checks out
a TATTOO on Hitman's arm.

DONNY

Hey man? Hey man?

Hitman barely acknowledges this mosquito.

DONNY

What's that mean? C,M,F. What's CMF?

ALI

Crazy Motherfuckers. It's part of the
Davie Boys. He's their godfather.

DONNY

No shit. Crazy Motherfuckers. Cool.

The GARAGE DOOR slides up to reveal Jay and the Topaz.
He wears a jacket and the bandana on his head, pirate-
style. Cassie races to him.

Jay kisses her and approaches Hitman. He nods. Hitman
returns it. Jay produces something fastened to his calf.

JAY

You think this is heavy enough?

It's a LEAD PIPE. Hitman pounds it into his palm.

HITMAN

If you hit him right.

JAY

What, like to the back of the head?

HITMAN

Back, front, don't make no difference.
You just gotta do it hard enough.

Hitman glances at Ali and further tries to impress.

HITMAN

Like, you gotta whack the guy. You
can't just smack him. Like you're in
a fight and you're real mad. You
ain't tryin' to hurt the fucker,
you're trying to kill him.

JAY

I got something else.

Jay produces a SCUBA DIVING KNIFE from its sheath.

HITMAN

Now that's cool. It's Jay, right?

Jay nods. Donny seeks approval with a ALUMINUM BAT.

DONNY
Do you think this is good enough?.

HITMAN
For what? Baseball?

DONNY
No, the guy.

HITMAN
What guy?

DONNY
The guy we're gonna kill.

HITMAN
I don't fuckin' know, man.

Donny produces his own, serrated KNIFE.

DONNY
How about this then?

COUSIN DEREK
Are we just gonna beat the shit outta
this guy or are we gonna kill him?

Silence. Finally, Cassie comes forward.

CASSIE
Look, I want this motherfucker dead
and I want no more shit about it.

HEATHER
The sonofabitch raped Ali, right?

Hitman looks over.

HITMAN
Is that true?

Ali nods, matter of factly.

HITMAN
A guy like that deserves to die.

DONNY
Yeah! All right!

CASSIE
I want him dead!

ALI

Yeah!

HEATHER

Dead!

JAY'S POV. He quietly steps back and observes all of them, except Hitman, chanting "DEAD, DEAD, DEAD" over and over. A surreal sight.

Hitman steps to the center of the circle, holding up his hand like a camp counselor. Everyone goes quiet, almost.

DONNY

Dead! Oh. Sorry.

HITMAN

Look, uh, people. I got to know some shit here. I mean, this ain't 'xactly Tiddlywinks for me. Like a bunch of kids playin' fuckin' make believe.

CASSIE

Hey, man? Who said it was a game?

HITMAN

I know, all right. I hear you, but, I need you people to understand some shit. You brought me into this and you should know, I'm like, me and my people, uh, we're what you call serious people. I mean, we're all talkin' English? You know what I mean by serious?

DONNY

Yeah, we know what it means.

HITMAN

What's it mean, bud? When I say I'm serious, what's that mean to you? Enlighten me.

DONNY

It means you ain't playin'. I said from the start I'll kill the dude. I was the first to step up. I mean, don't be callin' me a little kid.

Hitman shifts his eyes to a quiet Derek.

HITMAN

You sure you're up for this shit?

DONNY

(jumping in)

Yo, man, this dude is cold. We been hangin' a couple days now, and I seen this guy do shit you wouldn't believe.

HITMAN

Right. Well, okay, that's good. Because tonight we're gonna take a little trip. A trip to a different place. And I gotta know if everyone's got the balls for it.

HITMAN THEN LOOKS TO JAY. The two lock eyes.

HITMAN

How you feelin', junior?

A hesitant Jay stares at the man and, just as he starts to speak, the front door opens. It's Mrs. Ferguson.

MRS. FERGUSON

What are you kids up to tonight?

JAY

Nothin', Ma. Just goin' to a movie.

MRS. FERGUSON

Okay. Be careful with the car, honey?

He nods and she shuts the door. Jay's embarrassed.

HITMAN

Livin' at home sucks, huh?

(Jay nods)

All right. Let's get this over with.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - LATER

From the lawn, Bobby watches the two cars stop. Jay bounds across the grass and slaps hands with him.

JAY

Hey, man. What's happenin'?

BOBBY

Who are those assholes?

JAY

Some dudes Ali brought from Palm Bay.

BOBBY

Some dudes? I thought she wanted to fuck me?!

JAY

She does. But we're gonna see if her Mustang can beat my old lady's ride.

BOBBY

A five-point-O against the Topaz? That's a bunch of shit!

JAY

Come on, dude, chill. We're going to those sand dunes in Weston. You did all right last night, right?

Bobby thinks about it and walks over to the Mustang. He opens the passenger door and looks at Heather.

BOBBY

Get in back, bitch.

Heather smugly demurs. As she does, Bobby eyes her ass.

BOBBY

Mmmmmmm. I'll keep you in mind, baby.

(to Ali)

Slide over. Let a fuckin' man drive.

CUT TO:

INT. TOPAZ - MOVING

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD. The Mustang floors it through a very YELLOW LIGHT. Jay desperately follows.

HITMAN

Guy's an asshole to drive like that.

CASSIE

See what I mean?

INT. MUSTANG - MOVING

Bobby takes a hit of a joint and stares back at Donny.

BOBBY

So what's your deal, man?

DONNY

Huh?

BOBBY

What are you doing here?

ALI

(saving him)

Donny is Heather's boyfriend.

BOBBY

So why'd you guys come down?

They shrug.

ALI

I wanted them to see you. See what a fine looking dude I'm going out with.

BOBBY

You call that goin' out? I call that a blowjob. A damn fine blowjob, but a blowjob just the same.

HEATHER

(leaning forward)

What do you call "goin' out?" I mean, what's your definition?

BOBBY

What's your name again? Feather?

HEATHER

Heather.

BOBBY

Well, let me ask you somethin', Feather? Are you a hooker, too? Like your friend here?

HEATHER

I think you better watch your mouth, dude, or my boyfriend'll get pissed.

BOBBY

Who's that? Lonnie? Lonnie here in the backseat's gonna get pissed off and then what? Lonnie. Here, Lonnie!

DONNY

It's Donny, dude.

BOBBY

Whatever. You know your girlfriend's a hooker? Both of 'em were busted when they were fourteen.

BOBBY (cont'd)
Remember that teen prostitution bust?
That was these two holes, turnin'
tricks for crusty old men at 100 bucks
an hour.

Ali stares at an amused Bobby, homicide in her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. TOPAZ - MOVING - LATER

Hitman looks to Derek in the backseat.

HITMAN
So...we knockin' the tar outta this
guy or are we gonna take some real
disciplinary action?

COUSIN DEREK
They say they want to kill him.

CASSIE
We brought you 'cause you're supposed
to be the big hitman, gangsta and all.

HITMAN
Well, you gotta have a signal and all.

JAY
A signal?

HITMAN
He's here 'cause he thinks Ali wants
to screw him, right? So, I suggest
the following: Ali leads him
somewhere, and the rest of us go
behind them, sneaking up or something,
and then somebody gives us the signal.

JAY
And then what?

HITMAN
Then we do him.

CASSIE
So what's the signal?

HITMAN
Let's wait till we get there, so I can
check out the scene. This has to be
done right, you know.

Jay pulls the Topaz down a path and his headlights encounter Ali's parked Mustang on the shoulder. Down below, the trash-strewn, weedy banks of a CANAL.

IN THEIR HEADLIGHTS. Bobby comes around the car.

EXT. DEAD-END DIRT ROAD - BOBBY AND ALI

She and her mini-skirt sidle up to Bobby. Bobby runs his finger down her cheek to her neck. He leads Ali away from the cars, down to the canal. Donny sidles to Jay.

DONNY

You were right about this dude.

From the Mustang's trunk, Jay grabs the baseball bat and tosses it to Hitman.

HITMAN

You got the diving knife?

Jay nods. Hitman looks to Donny.

HITMAN

You plan on doin' anything?

Donny produces the SURVIVAL KNIFE.

Cassie's face is a shiny mask of sweat. Jay is grim, gulping, his sheath dangling from his hand. Donny nods and bounces on his feet. Derek doesn't know what to do.

HEATHER

So what are we gonna do?

CASSIE

I want this fucker dead.

HITMAN

Right. I got that. Okay. So here's the plan. Heather, you go down and talk to them. When you see it's cool, like he doesn't suspect shit, yell out, "there any alligators down there?" When we hear that: it's time.

HEATHER

Alligators in where?

HITMAN

In the canal. It's a signal.
(clarifying for her)

HITMAN (cont'd)
Just say something about fuckin'
alligators. Then we'll do him.

HEATHER
Say "alligators," then you kill him.

HITMAN
(to Donny)
You go with, holding hands like you're
goin' out and shit. When she gives
the signal, do it. Okay? So. Go.

JAY'S POV. Heather and Donny walk down to the canal.

HITMAN
(to Jay)
You back him up.

Hitman turns to Derek, he's riddled with anxiety.

HITMAN
We'll back them from up here.

Derek is secretly relieved.

Jay sets the sheath down and stares at the DIVING KNIFE,
nervous. Jay gives Cassie a manic glance and checks his
fingers. Trembling. He disappears into the darkness.

DOWN BY THE BANKS. Heather and Donny stroll to where the
moon meets the water, to the FIGURES of Bobby and Ali.

They share a look, then clasp one another's clammy hand.

HEATHER
(clears her throat)
Are...there any alligators down there?

Bobby and Ali both turn their heads.

TIGHT ON JAY. He listens, eyes wide.

Bobby and Ali face the approaching kids.

BOBBY
What?

HEATHER
Are there any alligators down there?

BOBBY
Alligators? Why don't you go for a
skinny dip and find out?

Bobby and Ali turn back around and face the water.

TIGHT ON JAY. He takes a step forward. Hitman puts a hand on his shoulder.

THEN IT HAPPENS.

Donny breaks free from Heather and flails down the slope.

Knife raised, Donny STABS Bobby in the back of the neck. The blade enters barely an inch. Donny clumsily tugs it out and falls backwards.

Bobby winces and throws his hand to the sharp pain. He heads for Donny, eyes bulging with rage. Then Bobby looks to his hand. It's covered with blood.

BOBBY

Oh, fuck! I'm bleeding! Fergie!

Hands to her mouth, Heather backs off. Ali's still frozen. Jay steps from the darkness.

BOBBY

Fergie?

JAY'S EYES ARE DEAD.

He stabs Bobby in the belly. Bobby grunts and they lock eyes. Jay frees the blade with an upward JERK.

Heather races up from the bank and whimpers her way into the Mustang's backseat.

Bobby looks down and sees the damage done.

BOBBY

No! Help me, Jay! I'm sorry!
Please, whatever it is, I'm sorry,
Jay! I'm sorry!

Jay backs up, defensively. Like a hyena, Donny circles and starts hacking Bobby in the back. He steps away to assess his damage.

Bobby walks slowly up the bank, his face and chest sheeted with blood. Everyone can only stare.

In shock, Bobby takes flight.

HITMAN

He's getting away! He's getting away!

Hitman chases with the bat. Jay stoically follows, hands slicked with blood.

INT. MUSTANG - TIGHT ON A PITIFUL HEATHER

She rocks back and forth, curled in a fetal position. This can't be happening. Then, the door flies open and she WAILS. Ali and Derek jump inside.

DEREK

Go! Get the fuck out of here!

Ali starts the engine. When the headlights come on--

BOBBY LAYS ON THE GROUND RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM.

Jay and Hitman converge on him.

BOBBY

Please. Please. Fergie.

HITMAN

Do it, Jay.

Jay straddles Bobby's broad chest with his knees and pins him down. He grabs Bobby by the hair and looks up to Hitman. It's a visual straight out of MORTAL KOMBAT.

HITMAN

Finish him!

Jay snaps Bobby's head back, exposing his throat for the knife's edge. Jay chokes back a sob.

DONNY

FINISH HIM!

Jay clenches his jaw and re-grips the KNIFE.

QUICK CUTS OF THE CONSPIRATORS. Their shock gives way to disgust and horror. Finally, as Cassie peers through her fingers, the final blow occurs.

In a sheet of blood, tear-streaked and hyperventilating, Jay RISES into the glare of Ali's headlights. He just stares into the light, trying to catch his breath.

HITMAN

Turn the goddamn lights off! And shut off the fucking car!

The engine is cut off and they fall into silence. A SOUND emerges, distinct but soft. They look at each other, quizzically, and come to the realization...

THE GURGLING OF A BABY. Chest heaving and pleading with blinking eyes, Bobby is STILL ALIVE.

Hitman steps forward, pushes Jay away, and lifts the bat into the air. Hitman rolls a look to the car.

The HEADLIGHTS die. The moon glints off the aluminum BAT, followed by a crackling thud. Silence.

DISSOLVE TO BLACKNESS:

INT. MUSTANG - A DOOR FLIES OPEN

Hitman stares at Derek in the back with Heather. Hitman is transformed. Alive, alert, confident. And menacing.

HITMAN
Get out of the fuckin' car.

COUSIN DEREK
Why?

HITMAN
Do what I say.

Hitman walks off.

HEATHER
Is he dead?

ALI
Oh fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck.

HEATHER
Is he dead?

COUSIN DEREK
Yeah, he's dead. They just caved his head in with a fucking baseball bat.

HEATHER
Can we go?

ALI
Shut up, Heather! Just shut up!

Hitman returns and pulls Derek from the car.

EXT. DEAD-END DIRT ROAD - THE BODY

Hitman leads Derek over and points down.

HITMAN
Get his wallet.

COUSIN DEREK
What?

HITMAN
I said, get his goddamn wallet,
asshole! What's the matter with you?

COUSIN DEREK
What?

HITMAN
I said, what's the fucking matter with
you? How come you're standing around
like a stupid motherfucker instead of
doing what I tell you to do?!

COUSIN DEREK
I don't know. I'm scared.

Hitman gets in Derek's face.

HITMAN
I'll tell you when to be scared,
motherfucker. When I tell you to be
scared, you better be so scared your
heart stops. Until then...
(pointing)
Do. What. I. Say.

COUSIN DEREK
His wallet?

HITMAN
His fucking wallet!

Derek reaches, hand shaking, and snatches his hand back.

HITMAN
What's the matter with you?!

COUSIN DEREK
Blood.

From Hitman's icy look, Derek averts his eyes and starts
frisking Bobby.

TIGHT ON JAY. Blood-soaked, he's not even there. Cassie appears at his side.

Derek holds Bobby's wallet like it could bite.

COUSIN DEREK

What should I--?

HITMAN

Get rid of it. Toss it in the canal where nobody can find it.

Derek walks over and hurls the wallet into the night.

HITMAN

Now help me move this.

Derek stumbles back up like an obedient Igor and removes his shirt, revealing a flabby white gut.

HITMAN

What the hell are you doing now?

COUSIN DEREK

Don't wanna get blood on my shirt.

HITMAN

We're not gonna hug him, asshole. Grab his feet and I'll grab his hands.

Donny stands on the high slope in the b.g.

DONNY

What are you gonna do with the body?

HITMAN

In the canal. The gators'll get him. By the time anybody comes out here, there won't be nothing left to find.

DONNY

Cool.

HITMAN

Okay? One, two, three, lift.

Hitman and Derek lug the body to the canal. Then--Bobby parts his lips and WHEEZES. They drop him in terror.

INSIDE THE MUSTANG. Heather and Ali.

HEATHER

He's not dead!

ALI
Of fuck, fuck, fuck....!

OUTSIDE AT THE BANKS. Jay's eyes wide, drunk with fear.

JAY
(softly)
Why isn't he dead?

CASSIE
We stabbed him. We cut his throat.
We beat his head in.

DONNY
Just throw him in the water. It's not
like he's gonna go for a swim.

Pleased with his response, Donny walks to the Mustang.

HITMAN
Okay, fat boy, you heard the man.

Donny bangs the Mustang window. A YELP. It rolls down.

HEATHER
Is he dead?

DONNY
Gettin' there.

DOWN AT THE WATER. Derek and Hitman toss Bobby's body
into the inky water. Hitman brushes off his hands.

AT THE CARS. Everyone's preparing to leave.

HITMAN
Where do y'all think you're goin'?

COUSIN DEREK
Where do you think, fuckin' Disney
World? We're going home.

Hitman reaches in the Mustang and grabs the keys.

HITMAN
Nobody's going home 'til we agree on
our alibis. Because if shit happens
to me, if one fucking thing happens to
me, I'm gonna find you. And each and
every one of you is gonna wind up
worse than that motherfucker over
there in the swamp.

CASSIE

He's right! We gotta get our stories straight! Jay? You okay, honey?

Finally, Jay snaps out of it and gets in the Topaz.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSTANG - MOVING

TIGHT ON ALI. She bites her lip as she drives.

ALI

We'll get this shit behind us, and Monday we'll be in Palm Bay for Donny's birthday party at his Mom's.

INT. TOPAZ - MOVING

TIGHT ON JAY. He drives, silent and crazed.

HITMAN (O.S.)

That didn't go down right. People just weren't cool.

Jay focuses on the lines on the road.

JAY

We shouldn't go to the Publix. Too many kids hang there.

CASSIE

How about North Beach? We can chill and get our shit together about the alibi.

HITMAN

Well, we better tell them.

Jay accelerates and the Topaz labors to catch up. Cassie sticks her head out the window. Ali looks over with a jolt. Cassie screams into the wind.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTH BEACH - THE BOARDWALK

STEADY ON HEATHER. As she heads toward the beach, she stops to take a hit off a glass CRACK PIPE.

PAN BACK TO THE TWO CARS. Everyone just mills there.

DONNY

Cassie, you got any weed?

CASSIE

I'm pregnant, asshole.

HITMAN

Where are the knives and shit?

JAY

In the trunk.

HITMAN

Get 'em. We gotta dump 'em. Time?

CASSIE

One-thirty.

Cassie and Ali open the Topaz trunk. Cassie sniffs.

CASSIE

It smells like blood in here.

ALI

What does blood smell like?

CASSIE

I don't know. It reeks!

JAY (O.S.)

Cassie?

QUICKLY TO JAY. Trembling. Cassie moves to him.

CASSIE

What is it, baby? What's the matter?

JAY

The sheath.

CASSIE

What?

JAY

The sheath to my diving knife. I don't have--I put it down somewhere.

CASSIE

But you know where, right?

JAY

No.

CASSIE
Oh, God. You gotta find it, Jay.

JAY
I can't go back.

CASSIE
You have to.

JAY
Somebody could be there by now.

CASSIE
Jay. They can get your fingerprints.

The duo walks over to report to Hitman.

HITMAN
Jesus Christ, what now?

JAY
I gotta go back. I forgot my sheath.

HITMAN
(agreeing)
We should go back anyway. We didn't cover the tire tracks; we might've forgotten some other shit out there. We just freaked, and left too fast.

CASSIE
I'm not fucking going back there.

HITMAN
Nobody asked you. Ali?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MUSTANG - MOVING

Ali drives, catatonically. Hitman barely turns around to talk with Jay.

HITMAN
You were his best friend...so you're gonna be the number one suspect.

JAY
I'll be the number one suspect? That doesn't make sense. I should be the last one they think--

HITMAN

You're not a cop. You don't know what sick bastards these guys are. How they suspect you even more if you're like the most innocent-seeming person in the world. It's like the more innocent you are, the more they get off fucking with you. We're here.

Jay tenses. Ali frantically bites her lip as she makes a slow turn. THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD they see the Dead-End road from before.

The Mustang creeps to a halt. They wait in silence.

ALI

Do you think there's--?

HITMAN

Sssshhhh.

Sounds of the swamp reach them. Everything seems cool.

HITMAN

Ready?

As much as they ever will be.

HITMAN

Let's do this quick. Police planes stealth these areas for vandals and raves and shit.

EXT. CANAL BANK - DARKNESS

Jay and Hitman ease from the car. Ali slams her door, forgetting. The two men spin on her.

ALI

Sorry.

Jay heads down toward the canal. Ali and Hitman start scuffing their feet over tire tracks.

Jay anxiously scours the brush, crossing the road. A particular bush jogs his memory. Wrong bush. He sees a second one and there's the SHEATH. He goes, grabs it--

--And spins to find the Hitman right there.

JAY

Jesus! Man, don't be doin' that!

HITMAN

Any luck?

JAY

Yeah, let's get the fuck outta here.

HITMAN

We need to see if he's still there.

JAY

No way, man.

HITMAN

We're here. We need to know if someone found him yet.

JAY

(pointing to Ali)

What if she strands us?

Hitman jingles her CAR KEYS.

After ten yards through the marsh, Hitman turns to Jay.

HITMAN

Over here.

Jay comes up behind him. They both lean forward to examine the dark form--

SOMETHING DARTS IN THE WATER. They both yelp backwards.

JAY

What the fuck was that?

Jay peers down. Small quick movements in the shadows.

HITMAN

Crabs. They're eating him.

A river of vomit gushes from Jay's throat.

HITMAN

That's so sick, man. That is so gross. Nature sucks, you know?

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTH BEACH - TIGHT ON CASSIE

She ferociously cleans the Topaz with some old newspaper.

CASSIE
I can still smell the blood!

HEATHER
I don't smell it.

DONNY
If she smells it, she smells it.
People are different, you know.

Cassie grabs the murder weapons and makes for the beach.

DONNY
Where are you going?

CASSIE
To bury this shit.

DONNY
Cool.

One by one, they follow her down.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIFEGUARD TOWER - THE KNIVES AND BAT

They drop into a hole. On her knees, Cassie furiously covers the hole as the others watch. She stops.

CASSIE
There's blood on my shoes. There's
blood on my fucking shoes!

She removes them, dumps them in the hole, and pauses.

CASSIE
Some dog will just come dig this up.
You know, people bring their dogs down
here. It's against the law. They do
it anyway. They bring their fucking
dogs and the lifeguards don't do shit.
If they find this shit, if they find
the stuff with the blood...

She looks back at them, lips quivering.

HEATHER
Chill, Cassie, you didn't do shit.

CASSIE
Huh?

HEATHER

I was there. You didn't do shit.
Neither did I.

COUSIN DEREK

And I definitely didn't.
(all eyes turn to him)
What? I didn't kill anybody. I went
along for the ride.

DONNY

You helped drown him, man.

COUSIN DEREK

Hey, listen, fucker. I just helped
carry the body because that Mafia guy
was gonna beat the shit out of me.

CASSIE

I didn't do shit.

She likes how that sounds.

DONNY

Me neither.

COUSIN DEREK

You stabbed him first!

DONNY

Only like an inch.

COUSIN DEREK

What about the other ten times?
(then)

Gimme that goddamn bat, Cassie. If I
don't return it, I gotta pay for it.

She hurls the bat at him. It barely misses.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - TIGHT ON CASSIE

At water's edge, she sees the dried blood on the KNIVES.
Blankly, she throws them into the ocean.

On her way back--HEADLIGHTS FLASH from up above.

CASSIE

Shit! They patrol out here at night.

HEATHER

Say we came out here to have an orgy.

DONNY

Should we like, take off our clothes?

From the shadows--it's Jay, Hitman, and Ali. The kids sigh as Hitman spots the BAT in Derek's hands.

HITMAN

Where's the knives?

CASSIE

I threw them in the ocean.

HITMAN

You threw them in the ocean?

DONNY

She's been going postal since you left. Thinks she's gonna get caught.

CASSIE

I didn't do shit. Anyone gets caught, it's you asshole. You cut him first.

The group erupts in argument.

Hitman sighs and walks between them once again, holding up his hand. After a long beat, he gains their silence.

HITMAN

So? We been talking about getting caught. And who did what. Well, that's a good talk to have. We need to talk about that. What'd you decide, by the way?

He searches their passive faces. He gestures to Donny.

HITMAN

You. Retarded Guy. What do you think? Did you kill him?

DONNY

No. I mean, I stuck the dude. I admit that, everybody saw me do that, but I didn't actually kill him. He was still alive after I stopped sticking him. You saw him run.

HITMAN
(to Derek)
And you?

COUSIN DEREK
You know I didn't kill him.

HITMAN
Well...who the fuck was it then that
helped me drown the sonofabitch?

COUSIN DEREK
He was dead already.

HITMAN
He was dead?

COUSIN DEREK
He was so far fucking gone, man. When
I helped you pick him up, I wasn't
picking him up to kill him. I wasn't--
(weakly sobbing)
I didn't kill him, man!

HITMAN
Ladies?

The girls shake their heads in the negative.

HITMAN
Of course. You guys had nothing to do
with it. You were just our dates.

Bemused, Hitman wraps a fraternal arm around Jay.

HITMAN
Well, Mr. Jay-dog and I have spoken.
On our way to retrieving Mr. Jay's
sheath to his knife, which he left at
the scene. The murder scene. You do
know we murdered a guy tonight. Your
friend. You do understand we took his
life. I just wanna make sure
everybody's up to speed on that.

He turns and grabs Donny by the shirt.

HITMAN
You do have enough of a fucking brain
in there to understand you killed that
motherfucker, don't you?

DONNY
Damn straight.

HITMAN
So let me explain something. I know you smokeheads are just having your thrills and shit, but this ain't no video game. Your buddy you were all so pissed off at and so on, well, he's lying in the swamp back there with his fuckin' eyeballs out and sand crabs eating his guts.

(after a beat)
Now, I don't intend to go down for this shit. If anyone here takes me down, either on purpose or because of being stupid, I'll kill his ass.

(turning to Cassie)
Or her ass.

(to all of them)
Now, we're going to sit here, and we're going to work on our alibi until I'm satisfied with it.

One by one, they sit and form a semi-circle around him. Slowly, we PULL BACK from the group.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JAY'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Jay and Cassie plod up the front lawn.

CASSIE
Are you cool to make the call?

JAY
Yeah. That guy just got me nervous.

CASSIE
Yeah, he's fucked.

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - TIGHT ON JAY

He awkwardly speaks into the receiver.

JAY
Bobby, this is Jay Ferguson. I called you. You asked me to call when I got home. So I'm calling.

MR. KENT (O.S.)
Jay?

Jay recognizes Mr. Kent's sleepy voice and hangs up. He gives Cassie a worried look. He just fucked up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NONDESCRIPT ROOM - TIGHT ON THE PRISONER

She imitates into a fake phone receiver.

PRISONER

"Hi, Bobby, I called you."

(straight ahead)

Really? No shit? Worse was that he said it's Jay Ferguson. Like it might be Jay "Someone-else." Jesus Christ. But it was understandable. We weren't thinking so good, you know?

CUT TO:

INT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - LATE MORNING

Mr. Kent checks his watch and thinks to himself, a sick feeling in his stomach. He pushes away from his desk.

PRISONER (V.O.)

So Fred Kent stayed home from work that morning. And nine o'clock rolled by. And ten. Eleven.

INT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - LATER

Mr. Kent sees that Bobby's bed is perfectly made.

PRISONER (V.O.)

The hours felt like days.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jay lies in bed, eyes wide open. Cassie tries to initiate love-making but he turns over.

Suddenly, the DOORBELL RINGS. Both sit straight in bed, hearts pounding.

JAY

Shit, Cassie. I'm so fucking scared.

THE DOORBELL RINGS AGAIN. Jay gasps for air and peels back the curtains. No cops. No action.

STEADY ON JAY. He composes himself as he makes his way through the house. He hesitates at the FRONT DOOR and looks through the PEEP HOLE.

PEEP HOLE POV. Mr. Kent stares straight ahead, as if he could see him.

Jay has to use both trembling hands to unlock it. shoots a nervous glance to Cassie and opens the door.

MR. KENT

Jay?

Jay stares. Mr. Kent is struck by a bad intuition.

MR. KENT

Jay? Is Bobby here with you? He didn't come home last night.

Jay can't find a single word. Cassie takes his hand and squeezes it, out of view. Finally--

JAY

He didn't come home last night?

MR. KENT

No. When did you last see him?

JAY

Oh, man. I knew it!

Cassie squeezes tighter, knowing he's going overboard.

MR. KENT

You knew what, Jay?

JAY

I knew something would happen! Last night he had a date with this country looking girl. She might have been hooked up with a gang or something.

Angrily, Cassie shoves herself between Jay and Mr. Kent.

CASSIE

You don't know what you're talking about, Jay. That's a bunch of shit.

JAY

Stay out of this, Cassie!

He shoves her back into the house.

MR. KENT

Well, I guess we should report this to the police then.

JAY

I don't know. I don't...he could be, well, you know, you can't ever tell.

Mr. Kent turns and walks back to his home. The look on his face spells disaster.

INT. HOUSE - CASSIE AND JAY

The two stand face to face.

CASSIE

What's the matter with you?!

JAY

What do you think?!

CUT TO:

INT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - THE OFFICE

TIGHT ON MR. KENT. He speaks into the receiver.

MR. KENT

Not at all. Please. Send someone. And thank you for your concern.

Mr. Kent dials again and speaks into the receiver.

MR. KENT

Jay? The police are coming to talk about Bob. Would you mind coming down to see if you could help?

INT. JAY'S HOUSE - TIGHT ON JAY

He hangs up the phone and looks at Cassie.

JAY

Oh, God, Cass, he's already called the cops. He wants me to talk to them!

CASSIE

Of course he does! You told him his son was probably killed by a gang!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Mr. Kent and Jay talk to OFFICER RAMSEY, 35, an attractive professional with a sad toughness. The Doberman's BARKING punctuates the background.

MR. KENT

I'm just...very worried.

Officer Ramsey turns to Jay, note pad in hand.

JAY

I'm worried, too.

OFFICER RAMSEY

You say he met a "country girl?"

JAY

Yes.

OFFICER RAMSEY

Where'd she meet him?

JAY

At the Publix where we work. The deli. We both work there.

She scribbles.

OFFICER RAMSEY

Which Publix?

JAY

Dania.

OFFICER RAMSEY

When?

JAY

Yesterday.

OFFICER RAMSEY

Were you there?

Jay hesitates. She looks up.

OFFICER RAMSEY

Sir?

JAY

Yeah, I was there. We both worked. That day.

Ramsey now diverts her attention from the pad to Jay.

OFFICER RAMSEY
Did you see this girl he met?

JAY
Yeah. She came in. That's how we met her.

OFFICER RAMSEY
You met her?

JAY
Well, we both did. But he was the one who went out with her.

OFFICER RAMSEY
What did she look like?

Jay's further unsettled by the dog's BARKING.

OFFICER RAMSEY
Mr. Ferguson?

JAY
Yeah?

OFFICER RAMSEY
I said, what did she look like?

JAY
I don't remember.

Stonefaced, Officer Ramsey drops her notepad to her side.

JAY
I just don't...you know. A lot of people come in.

OFFICER RAMSEY
Sir, you said she was a country girl. Just tell me what she looked like. Her height, the color of her hair, was she pretty, what was she wearing?

Jay thinks but can only shake his head.

OFFICER RAMSEY
Did she say anything about her name or where she lived?

JAY

I'm sorry. I just don't remember what she looked like or anything.

Ramsey jots down a number and hands Mr. Kent her card.

OFFICER RAMSEY

Okay. I'll make a report and we'll be in touch with you later.

Ramsey gets in her patrol car and stares at Jay before leaving. Mr. Kent follows suit and shuts his front door.

INT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - TIGHT ON MR. KENT

At the end of the hall, his wife seeks an answer. Mr. Kent shakes his head. Tears of worry well in her eyes.

EXT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - TIGHT ON JAY

He walks off, the dog barking even louder.

CUT TO:

INT. ALI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Heather exhales and passes the bong to Donny.

DONNY

Those scars are from cutting yourself?

HEATHER

It's okay, I never feel nothin'.
My doctor says I'm raising my
endorphin levels and stuff.

She crawls back into bed, joining Ali under the covers.

ALI

Do you think I could get into trouble?

HEATHER

For what?

ALI

For being there. Maybe I'm like a
witness or some shit.

HEATHER

Well, maybe. But that's no big deal.

ALI

But if you know something, maybe
you're supposed to tell the cops. Or
like they have some law where they can
get you in trouble, you know...

HEATHER

Like fine print or something?

ALI

Yeah. Like you were at an accident
and you left without reporting it.

DONNY

Yeah. They had that in Driver's Ed.

They fall silent.

DONNY

Think they'd say I was guilty?

ALI

You stuck him in the neck, right?

HEATHER

Yeah, but that Mafia guy was telling
him what to do, Ali.

DONNY

No shit. It was the Mafia guy.

ALI

Yeah, I guess they'd say he did it.

DONNY

Yeah, I mean, he like bashed his
brains out with the bat.

HEATHER

No shit.

Heather giggles, stoned. Donny joins in. Then,
releasing nervous anxiety, all three laugh out loud.

HEATHER

That was so gross!

DONNY

Yeah, I mean, he goes like--THWOCK!

ALI
You two are demented!

CUT TO:

EXT. PUBLIX TABLE AREA - DAY

Like he's dying a slow death, Derek pokes at his food.
An acne-scarred Dungeon Master, TERRY, 20, sits down.

TERRY
Hey, man, I heard. That's bonkers.

COUSIN DEREK
What?

TERRY
You're out of hand, man!

COUSIN DEREK
What the fuck are you talking about?!

Terry pauses. Derek grabs a fistful of shirt.

TERRY
The babality, dude! The babality!

EXT. PUBLIX TABLE AREA - LATER

Terry is horrified by Cousin Derek's story.

DEREK
It's like...I need someone to say I
wasn't nowhere with none of those
other assholes.
(hopeful)
Someone to say I was with them.

TERRY
What kinda asshole's gonna lie to the
cops about a murder?

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS HOUSE - DAY

In the midst of washing the family car, Pizza Hut Claudia
lets the hose run, shocked at Cassie's story.

CASSIE
I can't stop thinking about somebody,
you know, finding him. We shoulda hid
him better.

CASSIE (cont'd)
Pushed him into the canal more, so the
gators would get him. Claudia, I need
a ride back out there. I need someone
to help me move it.

CLAUDIA
It?

LISA
The body.

Claudia walks over to turn off the hose.

CLAUDIA
You want me to help you move a body?!

CASSIE
Well, fine, we won't move it. We'll
just see if the tire tracks are gone.

CLAUDIA
You really murdered Bobby Kent?

CASSIE
No, I was just there. They killed
him. I wouldn't say they "murdered"
him. He was, like, fighting back.

CLAUDIA
Look, Cassie, I gotta go. I gotta be
at Pizza Hut in a half hour.

Cassie follows her to the house.

CASSIE
Screw you, Claudia. All's I wanted
was a ride. I hope you have a problem
someday so you can ask my help. Shit.

As the door shuts, Cassie STOPS it with a foot.

CASSIE
And Claudia? Keep your mouth shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOODYEAR TIRES - LATER

The 5.0's on the racks for new tires. Ali holds her baby
next to her mother who hands the mechanic a credit card.

MRS. WILLIS
I don't understand this at all, Ali.
They were perfectly good tires!

ALI

Mother, what if you witnessed a crime,
and you like called a hotline...but
you didn't give your name or anything?
Would that count? I mean, you could
still say you reported it, right?

MRS. WILLIS

What're you kids up to, Ali?

ALI

A guy got kinda killed.

MRS. WILLIS

Murdered? Why would you just call a
hotline?

ALI

A Mafia Hit Man did it, Mother. If we
blabber he'll kill us.

(after a beat)

We need to move into an apartment.

MRS. WILLIS

That's what this is about? You want
me to get you an apartment?!

CUT TO:

EXT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Two 40-plus Detectives stand there, ED SCHUBERT and JACK
HOFFMAN, his GOLD SHIELD forward.

DET. HOFFMAN

Cassie Kuhn?

She barely gets off a nod.

DET. HOFFMAN

I'm Detective Hoffman, this is
Detective Schubert. We're trying to
find a friend of your's...Bobby Kent.

CASSIE

How would I know where he is?

DET. SCHUBERT

Miss Kuhn, we've received information
to the effect that your friend may
have been murdered.

Cassie blinks.

DET. HOFFMAN

Would you have any ideas about that?

CASSIE

No. Who told you all this stuff?

The two detectives share a knowing glance.

TIGHT ON CASSIE. It all starts to hit her at once.

DET. HOFFMAN (O.S.)

It was an anonymous call. And, of course, we wouldn't want to reveal that person's name, just as we wouldn't reveal yours, because we wouldn't want to expose anyone to danger. Would we?

(after a beat)

Where can we find Jay Ferguson?

CUT TO:

INT. YMCA GYM - DAY

With his gym bag, a haggard Jay enters to the clanging of METAL. He gauges the vast room. Nautilus machines. Pulleys. Men spot each other on the bench press.

On a Stairmaster is the aerobics instructor from earlier, Shannon. She waves to him. He ignores her and exits, to the puzzlement of the desk clerk.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - THE RINGING PHONE

Jay tosses his weight belt in the closet and answers.

INT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - INTERCUT THE CONVERSATION

She gasps into the receiver.

CASSIE

Jay, where you been?! Somebody made an anonymous call to the cops. They know about Bobby.

JAY

They found him?

CASSIE

I don't know. They were just here. Somebody told them he got murdered.

JAY
Murdered?

CASSIE
That's what they said.

OFFSCREEN--THE DOORBELL.

He stops, frozen, like the end is near.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAY'S PORCH - LATER

Schubert and Hoffman stand close, their faces in his.
Jay is as calm as he's ever been in his life.

DET. SCHUBERT
Naturally, we don't want to bother Mr.
Kent's family at this point, until we
have some more conclusive information.

JAY
Yeah. This is rough.

DET. HOFFMAN
Would you have an objection to giving
us a sworn statement, Mr. Ferguson?

JAY
Not if it will help. Will it help?

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAINCLOTHES SEDAN - DAY - SILENCE

In back, Hoffman administers an oath to Jay. Over the
front seat, Schubert eyeballs the kid's bearded stubble.

Hoffman makes Jay sign a form. Between them, a TAPE
RECORDER slowly churns.

INT. SEDAN - THE RECORDER

Calm, collected, Jay looks up from the spinning tape.

DET. HOFFMAN
We wanted to talk to you, Mr.
Ferguson, because we had information
that you were among several people who
were the last to see Bobby Kent alive.

JAY

Yes, sir, I think I was.

The Detectives share a look.

DET. HOFFMAN

For the record, how long have you known Bobby?

JAY

Thirteen years, sir.

DET. HOFFMAN

Did you see much of each other?

JAY

Yes sir. We saw each other every day.

DET. SCHUBERT

When did you last see him?

JAY

It was after eleven last Wednesday night. Out in front of his house.

DET. HOFFMAN

Who else was there, Mr. Ferguson?

JAY

Ali was there. Ali Willis, from Palm Bay. Cassie Kuhn. Derek Dzvirko, who's Cassie's cousin. Donny and Heather, who came with Ali.

DET. HOFFMAN

Do you know their last names?

JAY

No sir. They picked me and Cassie up to go to South Beach. Bobby was still getting ready.

DET. SCHUBERT

He was going out with you?

JAY

No, he was gettin' ready for a date. With this...hillbilly girl he met. Him and me had worked that day, and then, later, he came out and said, "I'm going to go out with that girl I told you about before." So we left.

DET. HOFFMAN

We have information that you saw him again after that point, Mr. Ferguson.

JAY

Well...that information is false, sir.

DET. SCHUBERT

We also have information he was stabbed by one of three guys who were in your car that night.

JAY

No, sir.

DET. HOFFMAN

Did you have anything to do with stabbing Bobby Kent or disposing of his body?

JAY

No, sir.

DET. SCHUBERT

Do you have any knowledge of who did?

JAY

No, sir.

DET. SCHUBERT

You made a phone call at four a.m. Thursday to his father.

JAY

Yes. I called and told Bobby I couldn't really talk. When I discovered it was his Dad, my heart jumped into my stomach. I thought it'd be rude to talk at that hour. They sounded so alike, him and his Dad. So I just hung up.

EXT. HOUSE - JAY'S POV

Turning from the front door. The Detectives watching.

INT. SEDAN - THE DETECTIVES

As Jay closes the door, the Detectives share a look.

INT. JAY'S FRONT DOOR - SAME

He knows that didn't go over well.

CASSIE (O.S.)
We gotta lay low, we gotta store up on
supplies. I'll borrow a credit card.

CUT TO:

INT. 7-ELEVEN CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Jay reluctantly holds a basket for Cassie as she grabs
sundries. If her battery is charged, his is wiped out.

CASSIE
...tomorrow we go to the bass fishin'
place and get a tent and stuff for
when we camp out. You like Pop Tarts?

JAY
I'm goin' out to the car.

He hands her the basket. She's oblivious to his concern.

INT. TOPAZ - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

Inside the 7-Eleven, Cassie shops diligently. Jay starts
the car and--

Stopping across from him is a PATROL CAR. The Passenger
Cop adjusts his nightstick and heads into the store. Jay
looks back to the Driver.

He's staring at him.

Jay manages a weak smile and pretends to fidget with the
stereo. The Cop stares...until the CB RADIO diverts him.

Jay looks back for Cassie. She's not visible. He can't
leave her there. So he waits...and waits. And waits...

Finally, she slinks from the store, empty-handed, horror-
stricken. She half-runs to the Topaz and clambers in.

CASSIE
Jesus, Jay! There's a cop in there!

Jay makes a tight face, knowing he's being watched.

CASSIE
What?!

JAY
Over. There.

Cassie looks. In the cop car, the Driver's looking away.

CASSIE
Oh God. Bail.

Jay starts the car. AGAIN. That God-awful screech.

The Driver Cop looks over. Jay gives a sheepish shrug.
The Cop stares, then allows himself a superior chuckle.

Jay backs out and drives away, eyes glued to the REARVIEW mirror. The police don't follow.

CUT TO:

INT. BABY NURSERY - LATE NIGHT - MONTAGE

Ali hovers over a baby crib and smokes a cigarette.

INT. ALI BEDROOM - SAME

Donny sleeps. Heather sits on the edge of the bed and cuts herself with the edge of some scissors.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Cousin Derek stares into the void.

INT. HITMAN'S HOUSE - THE TV

He drinks a beer and watches FISHING on ESPN. Fast asleep next to him, is a YOUNG MAN in his early 20's.

INT. BOBBY'S KITCHEN - THE REFRIGERATOR

Mr. Kent checks the milk. It's sour. He makes room in the sink, crowded with dirty dishes. He dumps the milk. And...it takes every fiber of his being not to lose it.

INT. JAY'S KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Mrs. Ferguson shuffles out in her robe, goes to the sink.

MRS. FERGUSON
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

OUT THE WINDOW. Jay waters the lawn, staring down the street, staring towards Bobby's house.

INT. JAY'S KITCHEN - END MONTAGE

Brushing his hands dry, Jay finds his mom fixing coffee.

MRS. FERGUSON
Great Saints, you're up early.

He forces a smile.

MRS. FERGUSON
You feeling okay, Loverbug?

She takes a motherly temperature. Jay almost crumbles.

MRS. FERGUSON
Honey, what's the matter with you?

JAY
I think something happened to Bobby.

MRS. FERGUSON
What do you mean "something?"

JAY
I don't know. But I'm worried.

MRS. FERGUSON
Where is he now?

JAY
Nobody knows.

MRS. FERGUSON
Well, knowing Bobby, that's nothing new. I'm sure he's fine, honey. Just do your best and let God do the rest.

JAY
You gotta cup for me?

MRS. FERGUSON
(shoots him a look)
Since when do you like coffee?

JAY
I don't know. Since right now.

MRS. FERGUSON
Okay. Cream and sugar?

Jay nods. She returns to her task.

JAY
I love you, Mom.

Mrs. Ferguson stops. She doesn't know what to say.

CUT TO:

INT. ALI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ali listens on the phone. Heather is nearby, curled in a chair like a cat. Donny paces frantically.

DONNY

I can't be with those people. I am not going to be with those--

Ali's expression stops him.

ALI

They have my name?

INT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - INTERCUT THE CONVERSATION

Cassie pulls her hair and barks into the phone.

CASSIE

They know about you. They saw me. They tape recorded Jay!

ALI

Who did you talk to, Cassie?!

CASSIE

It wasn't me, bitch! For all I know it was you! Whatever! The cops are onto us now! We gotta come up there!

ALI

Not with the cops on you, you don't!

CASSIE

You gotta hide us! They know how Bobby died and everything. I mean, we're all in this together, right?!

A CREAK. Cassie spins to find Mrs. Kuhn in the doorway. From the look on her face, she's heard it all.

CUT TO:

INT. FIREBIRD - DAY

Mrs. Kuhn and Cassie pull up to Derek's house. Mrs. Kuhn gets out while Cassie just sits there.

MRS. KUHN

Get out of the car, Cassie.

CASSIE

I didn't murder him, Ma!

MRS. KUHN
Shut up and get out!

Cassie opens her door and exits.

INT. DEREK DZVIRKO'S KITCHEN - LATER

Mrs. Kuhn has just spilled the story to a stunned Linda and Richard. In a HAPPY FACE t-shirt, Cousin Derek sits glumly with Cassie.

LINDA
What are you going to do?

MRS. KUHN
What are you going to do?

RICHARD
We're turning him in. Do the same.

Derek starts to cry.

CASSIE
Ma, if you turn me in, they'll arrest me!

Linda and Richard are dumbfounded.

MRS. KUHN
She's also real scared about this guy she says is in the Mafia.

RICHARD
Oh, gimme a break, Maureen! Sounds like some punk who still lives with his parents! Call the damn cops.

MRS. KUHN
Okay, but first we're gonna see Jeff Smith. Damned if I feed my daughter to the cops without a lawyer.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

JEFF SMITH slams the hood of his '68 Plymouth. He stares at the Kuhn's, his handsome face now a sickened grimace.

JEFF
Turn yourself in, Cassie. Now.

Cassie looks to her mother, who looks away.

CASSIE

Okay, but I'm posting bond right away.

Jeff shakes his head and wipes the grease off his hands.

MRS. KUHN

We can probably raise it, Jeff.

JEFF

No, Maureen. There'll be no bond.

CASSIE

Why not? I can post bond if I want.
If I have the money.

JEFF

They won't set one. This is a murder case. You might bond out later, but for now, no chance.

CASSIE

I'll be in jail? Like, for how long?

JEFF

A while. These are serious charges. You admit your part in this murder.

CASSIE

What?! I did not! Not the murder. I helped get him out there is all.

JEFF

Cassie, one way or another, you're involved in a murder.

CASSIE

Jesus, Ma! What kinda lawyer is he?! I thought lawyers are supposed to get you out of trouble!

JEFF

Cassie, trust me. You're involved.

CASSIE

Who says?

JEFF

The law says.

CASSIE

What law? I didn't even touch the son of a bitch. How can the law say I killed him? You mean, like, the cops?

JEFF

Do you know where laws come from?

(she doesn't)

It's imperative you're very careful about what you say and do from now on. If you cooperate before everyone else is locked up, I may be able to cut a deal. Florida's a death penalty state, Cassie. You could be executed for this. Turn yourself in. Tonight.

CASSIE

Ma! You promised!

MRS. KUHN

Jeff, I promised I'd take her to a motel to let her figure things out.

JEFF

What's there to figure out?!

MRS. KUHN

It's just for the night, Jeff.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He looks up from his turntables, tears in his eyes, JERKS off the headphones. He FLINGS them across the room.

He flip records into the wall. They SHATTER.

Jay knocks albums to the floor, dismembers phonograph arms, rips his system's guts, scatters them everywhere. He tumbles a dresser, smashes shelves. He hurls a hefty amplifier across the room--his wall mirror RAINS GLASS.

Finally, drained, Jay COLLAPSES in a heap.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARKED SEDAN - NIGHT

Still crying, Derek points past the DEAD-END ROAD.

COUSIN DEREK

He's right over there.

QUICKLY TO ILLARAZA. A grumpy, Broward County Sheriff. He grimly pulls to the shoulder and grabs his Maglite.

ILLARAZA
Stay in the car.

EXT. WEEDY CANAL BANKS - SAME

The beam slices through the darkness. As it approaches the canal, a loud high-pitched BUZZING fills the air.

TIGHT ON ILLARAZA. The moon's reflection places his sober expression as he splashes through water.

The BUZZING is now deafening.

Then the stench hits him. He covers his face with a handkerchief. He bumps into something and is swarmed by FLIES. He recovers--

ILLARAZA'S POV. A dark shape is partially submerged. The light's beam pans over a t-shirt, then a HUMAN HAND.

EXT. DEAD-END DIRT ROAD - SAME

Illaraza returns to car. Derek's outside waiting.

COUSIN DEREK
Did you find him?

ILLARAZA
Shut up.

He reaches for his radio. ON THE TRACK--RUNNING BOOTS.

CUT. TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - POLICE MOBILIZATION

Weapons readied. German Shepherds. A generator hums. A succession of high spotlights wait in the dark.

INT. EXPENSIVE HOUSE - A 65-YEAR-OLD MAN

Half-asleep, in his robe, he checks the peephole.
PEEPHOLE POV. A cop stands at the door, his badge high.

COP
We have an arrest warrant. Open the door immediately.

The Man looks back to his WIFE in her nightgown.

WIFE
What do they want?

HUSBAND

Who do you think?

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - TIGHT ON HITMAN

He sleeps like a baby and sensing something over him, opens his eyes. Two guns are stuck in his face.

HITMAN

Oh, shit.

INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUED

Hitman is shamefully led past his senior citizen PARENTS.

EXT. HOUSE - HITMAN'S POV

He reacts to the searing glare of the police SPOTLIGHTS.

HITMAN

Oh shit, shit, shit, shit.

Led to a squad car, Hitman sees the flashing beacons, the barking dog, the grave Detectives. Hitman starts to cry. Then he starts blubbering, really letting go.

CUT TO:

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Utterly thrashed. Jay's propped against the bed, dead to the world. THE PHONE RINGS. He grabs it with a bloody hand and puts it to his ear.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - TIGHT ON CASSIE

Cassie speaks into the motel phone receiver.

CASSIE

My Mom got me a hotel room on her credit card. Wanna have room service?

JAY (O.S.)

I don't think so, Cassie.

CASSIE

Do you wanna know who's the rat?

JAY (O.S.)

No.

CASSIE

It was Claudia. But don't worry, what goes around, comes around. Tonight, I'm gonna fix that little whore.

INTERCUT THE CONVERSATION.

JAY

You're what?

CASSIE

After, I thought we'd hide at Ali's before we make our escape to New York.

JAY

New York?! Cassie, Jesus Christ! Come on, it's over.

CASSIE

She's a witness, Jay!

JAY

Cassie, are you fucking there?

CASSIE

Jay? Please come. I need you right now. Please. You, me, and the baby.

JAY

Cassie, I floundered that hillbilly girl story. I told the lady cop I saw her. I told the detectives I didn't. They know. They're coming. It's over.

Cassie brings into her lap -- her mother's .25 BERETTA.

CASSIE

I miss you so much, Jay. I can't even believe how much I miss you.

Jay sighs. Suddenly, a DIAL TONE.

JAY

Cassie? Cassie?

He hangs up looks up. His MOTHER stands there stunned, very frightened for her son.

MRS. FERGUSON

Do I even want to hear this?

Jay shakes his head, No. She leans on the wall.

MRS. FERGUSON
Have I...been that bad a mother?

JAY
No, I'm just a dumb son.

MRS. FERGUSON
This is about Bobby, isn't it?

JAY
Tomorrow, I promise. Right now, I
need you to trust me. The last thing
I'll ever ask you. I need the car.

CUT TO:

INT. PIZZA HUT KITCHEN AREA - LATER

Claudia removes her apron and PUNCHES her time card out.

MANAGER (O.S.)
Thanks again, Claudia. Great job
today.

EXT. PIZZA HUT ALLEY - SAME

Claudia PUSHES through the back door. She marches down
the alley like she's done it a thousand times, carefree,
twirling her uniform CAP. From the shadows, a VOICE--

CASSIE (O.S.)
Somebody called the cops, Claudia.

Claudia FREEZES. She knows who it is well before Cassie
steps into the dim light.

CASSIE
They know who was there. They know he
got stabbed. They know the whole
fucking thing.

CLAUDIA
What? What are you talking--

CASSIE
Don't. It's too late.

Claudia sees the GUN at Cassie's side.

CLAUDIA
Ohmigod. Cassie. Please.

CASSIE

You got a real sucky idea of bein' a friend, Claudia. All I wanted was a ride and you make a federal case out of it. You got problems, bitch.

(raising the gun)

Especially now.

CLAUDIA

Don't shoot me, Cassie!

CASSIE

Screw you, snitch! You stabbed me right through the fucking heart!

JAY (O.S.)

Cassie?

Cassie turns the gun on Jay. He keeps coming.

JAY

Gimme that, Cassie. You're gonna shoot yourself.

She PULLS THE TRIGGER. BLAM!

A long beat. Jay looks at himself. He's not hit.

CASSIE

Don't make me--

CASSIE'S POV. Jay ignores the gun and DECKS HER. The gun clatters and CAMERA totters us drunkenly to the ground as we go out of focus...to BLACKNESS.

Claudia's eyes are frozen as Jay straightens with the gun.

JAY

Is someone inside?

CLAUDIA

Please, Jay, I'm sorry.

JAY

Can someone give you a ride home?

A stunned Claudia nods and hurries back inside. Jay hefts Cassie to the Topaz; he discovers her ROOM KEY.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAY'S HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

She sips coffee and enters his bedroom. It's spotless. A letter sealed in an envelope rests on the bed.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - TIGHT ON CASSIE

Fully clothed, she awakens. She rubs her jaw, looks to the nightstand, and sees the room key. Suddenly--

A POUNDING ON THE DOOR. She knows right away.

INT. CITY BUS - MOVING - MORNING

Jay stares out the window and thinks to himself.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

DET. HOFFMAN works at his desk. Jay steps forward.

JAY
Detective Hoffman?

The two lock eyes.

INT. BOBBY HOUSE - TIGHT ON THE KENTS

They answer the door. The two officers from earlier remove their hats. Mr. Kent KNOWS. He places an arm around his wife, bracing for her reaction.

TIGHT ON THE COPS. Her anguish PIERCES the air. The older cop is stoic but the rookie can't help himself. He can't bear to watch. But he has to.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - TIGHT ON JEFF SMITH

Now in a suit, he looks straight ahead in disbelief.

JEFF
Taped statements, all incriminating themselves. Neat, tight and clean. The D.A.'s calling it a rocket ship.

QUICKLY TO THE LAWYERS. A handful convene over drinks.

LAWYER #1
Their only lament is they got caught.
Not one drop of remorse.

JEFF
It's way worse than no remorse. They
don't understand.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM HALLWAY - DAY

The KENT'S file into the hallway, overwhelmed despite
their numbness. Mr. Kent sees the various parents,
making pleas to the television cameras.

MR. WILLIS
She's a kid!

MRS. FERGUSON
It was a mistake.

MRS. KUHN
Just a dumb kid at the wrong place at
the wrong time!

Mr. Kent blinks in disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The seven defendants sit in the jury box, handcuffed to
one another. Women in the back row, males up front.
Sheriffs stand sentinel. Family members crowd the room.

TIGHT ON CASSIE. Eight months pregnant.

CASSIE
If it's a boy, I'm namin' him Jay.

He says nothing. Heather leans across Ali to Cassie.

HEATHER
Think they're gonna let you have it?

CASSIE
Shut up, you fucking snitch. You cut
a deal with them, we all know that.

ALI
Is that true, Heather?

CASSIE
You don't even know that yet, Ali?
What kind of lawyer have you got?

HITMAN

(to Derek)

You sorry ass rat motherfucker.
You're gonna regret this shit.

CASSIE

Leave him alone, asshole. Haven't you
done enough to screw up his life?

HITMAN

Listen, you dumb bitch, your fat
cousin here is reaming us the worst.

DONNY

Yeah, well, I don't even know what I'm
doin' here.

QUICKLY TO JAY. He's sick of it all. Finally--

JAY

You stabbed him! What do you call
that?

They fall silent. The whole courtroom is listening.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - A CLOTH MANNEQUIN

The D.A. jabs it with a KNITTING NEEDLE. Pan past the
evidence table and rust-specked SHOES to the DEFENSE
TABLE.

FREEZE ON HEATHER. On low-grade prison crack, arms a
sliced mess. Underneath, typed in rapid-fire,
journalistic fashion--

Heather Swallers, 7 years

Photos of the Swamp. Another NEEDLE in Bobby's "corpse."

FREEZE ON DEREK. Blubbering.

Derek Dzvirko, 11 years

Tire tread GRAPHS. Another needle.

FREEZE ON ALI. Chewing her lip.

Ali Willis, 40 years

The KNIVES. A needle in the back of the neck.

FREEZE ON DONNY. Very, very stoned.

Donny Semenec, life in prison

The baseball BAT. More NEEDLES penetrate like darts.

FREEZE ON HITMAN. An icy stare.

Stuart Fishbein, life in prison

Crime PHOTOS. Macabre, nauseating. A flurry of needles.

FREEZE ON CASSIE. Pleading her innocence.

Cassie Kuhn, life in prison without parole

The MANNEQUIN is stuck in the HEART with a final needle. It looks like a gruesome pincushion. END INTERCUT and--

PAN TO the defense table. Jay turns to the first row and places his hand atop his mother's. It's something he hasn't felt in some time. Her warmth. Anybody's warmth.

Jay stands and, across the court, addresses Mr. Kent.

JAY

I had somethin' smart to say, but it's, it's not gonna help you. There's no excuse for what I've done. I never had no creepy Uncles comin' around, my Mom didn't beat me, I don't worship Satan. I don't deserve your pity or forgiveness or your mercy. I took your son's life. And when I think of what I've done, sir, I want to die myself.

(addressing the court)

But make no mistake, I was...I am the kid next door.

FREEZE ON JAY.

Jay Ferguson, death by way of the electric chair.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NONDESCRIPT ROOM - TIGHT ON THE PRISONER

She stares straight ahead and smokes a cigarette.

PRISONER

One day you're in love and the next, he's being executed. Crazy, huh?

PRISONER (cont'd)

In the end, I guess crazy sounds fair. The lawyers'd like that. They use fifty dollar words like "diminished capacity" but by then it don't matter much, you're already payin' for things with cigarettes.

(exhales)

So now you know. Life is hard, take what you can, grow eyes in the back o' your head, girl.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL that our Prisoner, the 32 year-old Cassie, is speaking to a wide-eyed TEENAGE GIRL.

PRISONER

Sometimes I think about what mighta happened if we didn't get caught. A small family struggling to make ends, but happy. I always dream it happy.

GIRL

What about...not killing him?

PRISONER

With Bobby gone, there was hope. Choices, remember? With Bobby around there wasn't no choices. With him gone, I could keep my daughter. Know what I'm sayin'? It had to be. You had to be.

GIRL

(standing)

You're not my Mother.

PRISONER

I never got the chance.

GIRL

Yeah, you did.

She exits. Cassie stubs out her cigarette.

EXT. PRISON LOBBY - TIGHT ON MRS. KUHN

Now a mileaged sixteen years older, she enjoys a smoke in the sunlight. Her surrogate daughter exits the building and joins her with a sad smile. And they cross to the car without a word.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END